

Reasonable Answers

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17 Points of the True Church?



A Christian perspective on the L.D.S so called 17 points of the true church
By Robert E. Kiser

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Introduction

I originally did this for my dad to help answer something my sister sent him. I was born and raised in the L.D.S Church. I accepted Christianity realizing Mormonism is not true in about 1985. If this is the only material that you have from me then you really should check my website. I have written quite a bit explaining and defending major Christian doctrines. I also wrote a 199 page book on Mormonism. (Also Free) I cover the basics in that book showing Mormonism has a different God, a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit and a different gospel than what is found in the Bible. I also show evidence that Joseph Smith was a false prophet and refute other L.D.S doctrine using quotes from L.D.S authorities and scripture from the Bible.

There is some content here that is not in that book. Therefore I thought it may be helpful for those struggling with answering objections from the Mormon Church.

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Hi Dad!

Thank you for the "17 points of the true church that you sent me. Did Leslie put this together or did someone else? I know she is the one who sent it to you. I am just wondering who put it together. This letter is my response to that. As you can see a lot of this is stuff that I wrote a long time ago.

The first thing that jumps out at me about the "17 points of the true church" is not so much as what is there, but rather what is missing!!

I would think that anybody wanting to write about the "true church" would first and foremost have the most important issues on their mind.

To me that would be such things as:

1. The unity of the Godhead. (The Trinity)
2. The deity of Jesus Christ
3. The virgin birth of Christ.
4. The crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection.
5. Our salvation because of what Jesus did on the cross.
6. The authority of scripture.
7. The reality of hell

These are all major Christian doctrines! Salvation and the resurrection of Jesus are central themes in the New Testament. Jesus spoke of Hell far more than he ever spoke of heaven. Who God or Jesus is are extremely important issues. None of these doctrines mean anything if the Bible is not reliable, which of course is the position of the L.D.S Church; in spite of all of the evidence and the testimony of Christ himself. Yet the "17 points of the true church" manages to ignore All of these subjects!!!!!!

Therefore I will at least include salvation and the 3rd Article of Faith. All of these 7 doctrines should eventually be discussed. . I can't help to wonder, if perhaps they may be purposely eliminated because they are major Christian Doctrines and the L.D.C Church denies the majority of them!!!!

Reading through the pages I can see that as usual most things will be simply a matter of looking at the context of the passage given and asking your self does it really say what this verse is trying to be used for as a proof text.

A good student should ask themselves questions such as Who, What, When, Where and Why? By asking yourself questions like this about a passage you will be less likely to arrive at a false conclusion

For example on the first page after the 17 points I read We are in God's image then a quote from Gen 3:5 & 22

TO BE AS GODS

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (KJV)

THE LORD SAID BEHOLD MAN HAS BECOME AS ONE OF US

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

This is a perfect example of misuse of the Bible by not thinking it through and asking one's self these basic questions. In Genesis 3:5 the one quoted was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Then later the one quoted is God. Notice God said "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil". God did not say that Adam had become a god.

The first question that should be asked in Genesis 3:5 is Who said it? The serpent said it who we know is Satan. Is Satan a reliable source of truth?

John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

What is the devils purpose for man?

1 Pet 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

What happened in the case with Eve?

Gen 3:13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

2 Cor 11:3 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

So if Satan's purpose is to destroy us and he is a liar that deceived Eve by what he said to her; is what he said a reliable statement? Of course not!

Has Satan made a similar statement before?

Isaiah 14:12-15

12 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!

13 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.

14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

15 "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

"To be as gods" "To make myself like the most high" Sounds like the same sort of statement to me.

The anti-Christ will act in a similar fashion.

II Th 2:3-4

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

So Satan and the anti-Christ are ones who have or will seek to be like God. The question that can still be asked is there any other Gods at all?

I will include a section here that I have written before.

NO OTHER GODS

I know that Mormons try to use the Bible to support their belief in more than one God as well as the idea that man can become a God. So next I suppose I should review some of these so-called proof text used by L.D.S members.

1 Cor 8:1-6 (1) **Now concerning things sacrificed to idols**, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. (2) If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; (3) but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. (4) Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that **there is no God but one**. (5) For even if there are **so-called gods** whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, (6) yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

Most Mormons I have talked with start reading this text right in the middle of verse 5. The context of this whole chapter is concerning eating of food that has been sacrificed to idols as you can see in verse 1 here. Paul in verse 4 said there is no God but one. Then he goes on to talk about these idols and calls them so-called gods in verse 5 because the people considered these idols gods. Then Paul said there are many gods and many lords. He is still talking about the idols when he said this. There indeed was many idols that people considered a god or a lord. This however does not make them a god they are just an idol; which amounts to nothing. There are many false gods today but this does not make them a god. Paul says for us there is but one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ because the Christian is not supposed to have anything to do with idols.

Satan is also called god of this world 2 Cor.4:4 but he is no real God at all. He does not have any of God's attributes he cannot create nor does he possess the knowledge or power that God has. He has a title in this respect because of his authority or rule over this planet. He is even worshipped as God by some, but he is a false god in fact he will end up in the lake of fire Rev.20:10

Does John 10 show that there are other Gods?

John 10:29-39

29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

30 "I and the Father are one."

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?

35 "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken).

36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

In the text here Jesus claimed to be God in verse 30 by saying "I and the Father are one" Verse 33 shows this is how his enemies also interpreted it. Jesus then used Psalm 82:6 for his own defense. So let's look at that passage.

Ps 82:1-8 (NAS)

1 God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers.

2 How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? Selah.

3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute.

4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.

5 They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.

7 "Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes."

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is Thou who dost possess all the nations.

Here in the text that Jesus quoted from we see that these men who were given the title of "gods" were in fact unjust judges. This title "gods" was their position of authority as judges. Notice verse 1 God judges in the midst of the rulers. Who are these rulers? They are the ones who are judging unjustly verse 2. They are then exhorted to act, as they should in their position of authority verse 3-5. These judges are reminded that they reminded that they are called "gods". Also they are sons of the Most High. Then we see in verse 7 in spite of this position they will die like men. Does this text sound like it is speaking of actual Gods or judges?

Not only does the context here speak of actual judges, but also the same Hebrew word translated "gods" here is also translated judges in Ex.21:6, Ex. 22:8&9

The word “judges” below is the same Hebrew word translated “gods” in Ps.82:6.
You can verify this using the back of the Strong’s Concordance.

Exodus 22:8 "If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor's property.

Following is two different definitions of this Hebrew word.

Strong’s definitions of Hebrew words

430 'elohiym (el-o-heem');

plural of 433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative:

KJV-- angels, X exceeding, God (gods)- dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

Brown-Driver-Briggs’ defenition of Hebrew words.

430 'elohiym-

1) (plural) (a) rulers, judges (b) divine ones (c) angels (d) gods

2) (plural intensive -singular meaning) (a) God, a god, a goddess (b) god-like one

(c) works or special possessions of God (d) the one true God (e) God

So here in the 82nd Psalm not only is the context speaking of unjust judges, but the Hebrew word is sometimes translated judges. These are merely men not literal Gods.

Now back to our original text in John 10. Jesus claimed to be God by saying, “I and the Father are one” in verse 30. Even his enemies understood what he meant Verse 33. They said they were going to stone Jesus because he being a man made himself out to be God. Jesus then used the 82nd Psalm in his own defense. Jesus using this passage reminds them that even mere men who were judges have been called gods in scripture. Certainly then he who really was God had a right to the title. Jesus said they did not believe that he and the Father were one (i.e. God) by his own words. So he challenged them to consider the works that he did that they may know that “the Father is in me and I in the Father”. The Jews understood this again as a claim to be God that is why they tried to seize him, verse 39.

I know the Book of Mormon is not the word of God still I find it interesting that according to it there are no other Gods

Alma 11:21-29

21 And this Zeezrom began to question Amulek, saying: Will ye answer me a few questions which I shall ask you? Now Zeezrom was a man who was expert in the devices of the devil, that he might destroy that which was good; therefore, he said unto Amulek: Will ye answer the questions which I shall put unto you?

22 And **Amulek said** unto him: Yea, if it be according to the Spirit of the Lord, which is in me; for I shall say nothing which is contrary to the Spirit of the Lord. And Zeezrom said unto him: Behold, here are six onties of silver, and all these will I give thee if thou wilt deny the existence of a Supreme Being.

23 Now Amulek said: O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me? Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations?

24 Believest thou that there is no God? I say unto you, Nay, thou knowest that there is a God, but thou lovest that lucre more than him.

25 And now thou hast lied before God unto me. Thou saidst unto me --Behold these six onties, which are of great worth, I will give unto thee--when thou hadst it in thy heart to retain them from me; and it was only thy desire that I should deny the true and living God, that thou mightest have cause to destroy me. And now behold, for this great evil thou shalt have thy reward.

26 And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God?

27 And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God.

28 Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God?

29 And he answered, No.

"How is it that God is not aware of any other Gods, if in fact they exist?"

Isa 44:8 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"

How can one become a God as the L.D.S Church teaches, if there was no God formed before Him and there will never be a God formed after Him?

Isa 43:10 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.

Deut 4:35 "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him.

Deut 4:39 "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

Deut 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1 Sam 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides Thee, nor is there any rock like our God.

2 Sam 22:32 "For who is God, besides the LORD? And who is a rock, besides our God?

Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me.

Isa 45:5-6 "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other,

Isa 45:14 Thus says the LORD, "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you and will be yours; they will walk behind you, they will come over in chains and will bow down to you; they will make supplication to you: 'Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, no other God.'"

Isa 45:21 "Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except me.

Isa 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me,

Psa 18:31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God,

Neh 9:6 "Thou alone art the LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before Thee.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (KJV)

Psa 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

The Mormon idea "As man is God once was and as God is man may become" falls apart if there are no other Gods!

The Mormon idea in the 1st article of faith as in believing that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are 3 separate Gods falls apart if there is only 1 God!

The Mormon leaders become false witnesses saying that there are many other Gods but only one for us if in fact there are no other Gods!

Any verse a Mormon can come up with in the Bible to show there is more than one God will have to be taken out of context to make it appear to be so. Still this would not answer the question "How is it that God is not even aware of them?"

We really need to look at the context before accepting that some proof text given is actually saying what we are told that it is saying.

Now I would like to mention "Salvation" which ironically is not something mentioned at all in the "17 points of the true Church"

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

THE WARNING

Gal 1:8-9 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

The L.D.S 3rd article of faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel"

Even if we took this 3rd article of faith at the true meaning of the word "saved" it would be an untrue statement. We are not saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. So if we take this 3rd article of faith at face value then the issues between Christianity and Mormonism would be What does it mean to be saved? and Grace Versus Works.

Unless otherwise noted scripture is from the New American Standard.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

I believe a good place to start this discussion is to see what the words saved and salvation actually mean.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary tenth edition

SAVED 1. a: to deliver from sin b: to rescue or deliver from danger or harm
c: to preserve or guard from injury, destruction or loss

SALVATION 1. a: deliverance from the power and effects of sin.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

SALVATION: Deliverance from the power of sin; redemption. In the Old Testament, the word salvation sometimes refers to deliverance from danger <Jer. 15:20>, deliverance of the weak from an oppressor <Ps. 35:9-10>, the healing of sickness <Is.38:20>, and deliverance from blood guilt and its consequences <Ps. 51:14>. It may also refer to national deliverance from military threat <Ex. 14:13> or release from captivity <Ps. 14:7>. But salvation finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Man's universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible.

The term saved and salvation means that we are rescued and delivered. So a logical question would be rescued and delivered from what? When we turn to Christ we are saved from receiving God's wrath.

Rom 5:8-9 "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

1Thes 1:9-10 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

The scripture is clear that to be saved means that we will escape the wrath of God. According to the L.D.S 3rd Article of Faith "all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" The Bible however states that salvation comes apart from works. In other words we are not saved because of "obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel".

Gal 3:2-3 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Rom 4:1-5 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

John 6:28-29 They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace **you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift of God; not as a result of works**, that no one should boast.
(See also Rom.6:23)

Notice that salvation is a gift of God. You do not work for and earn a gift. If you work for something it is wages due and no longer a gift. Mormons will of course refer to the book of James to show try to show that we are saved by works. In context James is not contradicting Paul he simply is showing that genuine faith produces works. We are not saved by our good works. However if we really are saved we will naturally have good works. One does not say baa baa to become a sheep. One says baa baa because one is a sheep.

The L.D.S 3rd Article of Faith also redefines the word saved to mean something other than how the Bible defines the word saved. Remember saved means delivered from the wrath of God Rom.5:8-9

Bruce R. McConkie (Mormon Apostle)
Mormon Doctrine, p.670-671 Salvation by Grace

Since all good things come by the grace of God (that is, by his love, mercy, and condescension), it follows that salvation itself -- in all its forms and degrees -- is bestowed because of this infinite goodness. However, one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone and without obedience. This soul-destroying doctrine has the obvious effect of lessening the determination of an individual to conform to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel, such conformity being essential if the sought for reward is in reality to be gained.

Immortality is a free gift and comes without works or righteousness of any sort; all men will come forth in the resurrection because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

(1 Cor. 15:22.) In and of itself the resurrection is a form of salvation meaning that men are thereby saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment. (2 Ne. 9:17-27.) "O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more." (2 Ne. 9:8) In this sense, the mere fact of resurrection is called salvation by grace alone. Works are not involved, neither the works of the Mosaic law nor the works of righteousness that go with the fullness of the gospel.

The trouble with Bruce McConkie's statement is that saved does not mean resurrected no matter what dictionary you use. The Bible does not teach universal salvation. In other words not everyone will be saved.

John 3:17-18 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Luke 8:11-12 (Jesus speaking) "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God." And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

It is obvious in these 2 passages that not everyone will be saved. So it cannot mean resurrection in the way Bruce McConkie uses it. Everyone will not be saved but everyone will be resurrected as you can see in the next two passages.

Dan 12:2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

In summary we are not saved by works but by grace alone. We do good works because we are saved, not to become saved. Not everyone will be saved but everyone will be resurrected some to eternal life others to eternal judgment. Therefore the 3rd article of faith and Bruce McConkie's book Mormon Doctrine are both incorrect because the Bible disagrees with them.

GRACE VS WORKS

Some people say we are saved by grace while others say we are saved by works.

For some we need to first define what this means. First of all let's look at the dictionaries definition of these words.

GRACE: (1) a: unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification.

(from Webster's tenth Collegiate Dictionary)

GRACE: Favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves. Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth"

<Ex. 34:6>. Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

WORK: (8) pl: performance of moral or religious acts (salvation by ~ s)

WORKS: (1) in process of preparation, development, or completion.

(From Webster's tenth Collegiate Dictionary)

WORKS: Acts or deeds. God's works are praised often in the Book of Psalms <Ps. 33:4; 92:5; 104:24> and Christ's works are thoroughly discussed in the Gospel of John <John 10:25-38>. Man's works are either good or bad, and these two categories are often mentioned together <Rom. 13:3,12; Heb. 6:1, 10>. Christians are taught to display good works <Matt. 5:16; Rev. 3:8>. (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

To say a person is saved by grace means this. No one by their own merits or good deeds will ever earn or gain eternal life. In other words no matter how good of a person you are you will never make it to heaven on that basis. Now to say that a person is saved by works means this. If you live a good clean moral life you will go to heaven when you die. This is basically saying that by trying to be obedient to God's laws you have earned the right to be in heaven. Scripture clearly shows that we are saved by grace alone. There are verses that some have stumbled over believing they show we are saved by our works or good deeds. Therefore it is important that we consider these verses as well.

Rom.3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

John 6:28-29 They said therefore to Him, "**What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?**" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Titus 3:5"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit"

Eph 2:8-10 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Paul here says salvation is a gift of God. When you work for something you receive what is owed to you. Webster's Dictionary defines a gift as, "something voluntarily transferred from one person to another without compensation". We receive salvation as a gift from God. There is no way that we can compensate for it!

Not only have we seen that we are not saved by our deeds, but scripture tells us that we could not even come close by our works or good deeds.

Isa 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Rom 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Ps 39:5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. (KJV)

15

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

I Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Considering these passages how can we possibly be good enough? We can't! That is why Jesus died on the cross for us. We must accept his payment for our sins to be saved. We cannot earn our way to heaven by being "good".

Now there are those that try to abuse grace. Some people think they can say a prayer accepting Jesus as their Lord and then live however they want. The idea is like buying fire insurance; once you got it then it might be OK to play with fire. The problem with this thinking is that God is able to judge the thoughts and intents of our heart Heb.4:12. We are not saved by saying certain words in the form of a prayer we are saved by faith.

In Webster's tenth Collegiate Dictionary one of the definitions of faith is "*belief and trust in and loyalty to God*" Those that say they believe in God and claim they said a prayer accepting Jesus as Lord should have some change in their life. The Bible tells us even the demons believe there is one God James 2:19. The demons believe, but they do not trust in nor are they loyal to God. Unfortunately this also describes many people claiming to be Christians. Granted becoming a Christian does not mean you become perfect, but it does mean there is a change in your life 2 Cor.5:17. A Christian does not become sinless here in this life I Jn 1:8-10. This change that takes place in a genuine Christian will continue on for their whole life Phil.1:6 (see also I Jn 2:4-5, Mat.7:21-23, Rev.3:15-16, Lk.6:44-46)

Some people in the time of the New Testament also tried to take a similar attitude that I described as buying fire insurance. It is this very issue that James addressed that some people take out of context to try and show we are saved by works.

James 1:22- 2:26 (chapter 1) (22)But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; (24) for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. (25) But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. (26)If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. (27)This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (Chapter 2) (1) "My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.(2) For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, (3) and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,(4)" have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?(5) Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?(6) But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? (7) Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?(8) If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.(9) But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.(10)For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.(11) For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.(12) So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.(13) For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs

over judgment.(14)What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?(15) If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,(16) and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? (17) Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (18) But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (19) You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.(20) But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? (21) Was not **Abraham our father justified by works**, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? (22) You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; (23) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.(24) **You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.**(25) And in the same way was not **Rahab the harlot also justified by works**, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?(26) **For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.**

People that say we are saved by works will generally focus on the part of this passage that is in bold lettering in verses 2:21-26. Take another look at 1:22, James declares that those that do not live their faith are deceiving themselves. Then again in 1:26 he uses the person's words as an example. James says if they do not control what they say their religion is worthless. Jesus himself said that a person's words showed what was in their heart Lk.6:45, Mt.12:34. In Js.1:27 James defines true religion as one that has action taking care of those in need and living a godly life. In 2:1 he is dealing with attitudes, which is another matter of the heart. Just as Jesus said "for the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." James is saying that our actions also show that which fills the heart. The point James is making is this, if you have genuine faith then your heart is right with the Lord and it should show in your life. Those that think they are saved by works should take a good look at James 2:9-10. According to James one sin makes you guilty of all. Considering that the wages of sin is death Rom.6:23 this paints a grim picture.

Then in 2:14 James ask a very important question. " *What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*" The answer to this question is no!

As James goes on to show faith without works is dead. In other words if you have genuine faith you produce fruit. The illustration James used shows Abraham had a genuine faith. This is shown in his obedience to do as the Lord said. Then in 2:23 "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," His righteousness came from belief. Abraham's belief resulted in obedience. To say a person is saved by works is like putting the cart before the horse, it just doesn't work. Sheep don't say baaa baaa to become sheep. They say baaa baaa because they are sheep. We as Christians do not do good works so that we can be saved. We do good works because we are saved.

Paul used this same illustration with Abraham to show that we are not saved by works.

Rom 4:1-5 "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness"

Some people would argue that man is not saved by faith alone. Then you would be led to James 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

At first glance this can almost seem to prove their point. However we must remember that if other scripture seems to contradict the passage being looked at then it needs further investigation. Remember what Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

This passage seems clear that works is not part of what saves us. So how does that tie in with James 2:24?

There are actually two separate issues here. James said man is justified by works. He did not say man is saved by works. Saved means rescued or delivered.

Let's look at the definition of this Greek word translated as justified in our bible.

Justified, (Thayer's Definition of Biblical Words)

1344 dikaiōo-

1) to render righteous or such he ought to be

2) to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered

3) to declare, to pronounce one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be

I had to look up "evince" it means (to constitute outward evidence of)

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th Edition

James 2:21-24 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

Take notice of the two different words used here. Believed and justified have different meanings.

Abraham **believed** God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,"
Was not Abraham our father **justified** by works,

Abraham's belief is where he was declared righteous. He was "saved" by his belief not his works.
Eph.2:8-9.

Abraham was "justified" by his works. Part of the definition of justified is to show outward evidence of. This fits the context of what James was saying.
When examining James 1:22- 2:26, Rom 4:1-5 and Eph.2: 8-9 closely we find that the following three statements are true.

Abraham was saved by faith alone.
Abraham was justified by works.
Abraham was not justified by works alone.

James explained how Abraham's works and faith worked together showing justification before men. This is the evidence before man that one really is saved. James shows the fruit of justification while Paul shows the root of it.

Paul showed that justification before God was not by works in Rom. 4:1-5 & Titus 3:5. Yet in Eph.2:8-10 Paul states that we were created for good works that we should walk in them.

Both Paul and James mention that Abraham was declared righteous because of his belief. Both James and Paul declare that we should have good works. James shows the fruit or evidence before men. While Paul shows we are saved before God because of our belief and God's mercy.

Some have said we are saved by faith to begin with when we first accept the Lord. Then after this point we are saved by or actions. This is irrational thinking. The Bible tells us that Christ died for our sins 1 Cor.15:3 and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from **all sin** I Jn 1:7. Now I ask you how many sins had you committed when Christ died for them 2000 years ago? None of them right? They were all in the future. Which sins does the blood of Christ cover? The Bible says **ALL sin**. Since all of our sins were paid for on the cross before we were born. How could we now after accepting the Lord be saved by our works?

Paul also addressed this issue.

Gal 2:20-3:3

(20) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

(21) "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

(Ch.3vs.1) You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

(2) This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (3) **Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?** (see also Gal.5:1-6)

Paul here is very clear that we are saved by grace. He even states that if this were not so then Christ died for nothing. He considered the idea of after receiving the Lord to then be perfected by works foolishness. There is another statement Paul made, that some people misunderstand thinking we are saved by works. While reading it keep in mind what he said here in Galatians chapter 2 & 3.

Phil 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling.**

Is Paul contradicting himself here? No not at all. In this same letter he said

Phil 1:6 "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.".....

Phil 1:27-29 "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too from God. For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake"

There are a couple of views of this and I believe both are correct and applicable to the context. First of all Paul declared in this letter that the Lord is the one that began this good work in them. He then admonished them to conduct themselves in a worthy manner just as we seen that James did in his letter. By Paul saying work out your own salvation he was encouraging them to live in a manner worthy of their salvation. It is important that you recognize he said "work out your salvation" Paul did not say "work for you salvation" Perhaps it might be easier understood like this. You have a body, and when you exercise your body it is called a work out. You are working out your body. When you are already saved and you continue to live in a manner worthy of the Lord, you are working out your salvation. You are not working for your salvation.

The second view is that since salvation also means deliverance Paul was telling them through Christ to work through their hardships. By the Phillipian church standing firm in one spirit it was a sign of destruction to their opponents. It was also a sign that they were saved. The same as James was saying in his letter their works was the sign that they were saved. It was important that they stood firm even in hard times. As Paul said they were" *granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake*"

We are saved by faith not works. But good works should be very important to the true believer. Remember what Jesus said "why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46

Following is some related scripture that shows we are saved by grace not works for those that would like to look into this further. Gen. 15:6, Matt 19:23 -29, Luke 7:49-50, Luke 8:11-15, Acts 15:8-11, Acts 16:30-31, Rom. 3:19-28, Rom. 4:4-5, Rom. 8:8, Rom 10:9, Rom 10:13, Rom. 11:6.

I will now go on with the "17 points of the true church".

Point 1. Christ organized the Church. (This is a true statement)

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. (NAS)

Point 15. The true Church must be a restored Church.

Acts 3:19-20

19 "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, (NAS)

The scripture given above was in the letter you sent me.

First of all Christ did organize the Church and he s the head of it!

The restored church implies two things.

A. The Church did exist and then was lost.

B. The Church was restored as it was intended.

I will address this in two parts.

A. The Church did not need to be restored it never left.

B. The restored Church implies that it used to exist before.

A. THE CHURCH DID NOT NEED TO BE RESTORED; IT NEVER LEFT

According to Mormonism Christ's church was non-existent soon after the apostles and was restored upon the earth in the 1800's through Joseph Smith.

Following are some quote from L.D.S sources.

Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:17-19

17 It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.

When the light rested upon me **I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other--This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!**

18 **My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join.** No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right **(for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)--and which I should join.**

19 **I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong;** and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

Here in L.D.S scripture we find that Joseph Smith declared that he should not join any of the churches in his day because they were all wrong and their creeds were an abomination to the Lord.

D&C 1:29-30

29 And after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon.

30 And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually--

Here in this L.D.S scripture we learn that Joseph Smith was to be used lay the foundation of the Lord's church.

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine,p.43 APOSTASY

This universal apostasy began in the days of the ancient apostles themselves

According to this Mormon Apostle this apostasy where the church disappeared from the face of the earth began in the first century.

**Encyclopedia of Mormonism,
Vol.4,TRUE AND LIVING CHURCH**

However, as Christ and his apostles had prophesied, the "true" Church they established was lost from the earth through apostasy (JS—M 1:7-9, 22; 2 Thes. 2:3). Therefore there was a need for a restoration. Guided by angelic messengers and by revelation from God, Joseph Smith and his successors have reestablished Christ's Church in these "latter days." Members bear testimony that the Church is true because they believe it is the restored Church of Christ, with the same authority, teachings, organization, and spirit found in the Church that the Savior originally established.

The Bible does tell us of a falling away in the last days. It does not however declare that Christ' church would disappear all together from the face of the earth.

Isa 9:6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

What is his government? It is his rule or dominion that will increase and there will be no end. God rules over and has dominion over his church. God says there will be no end to this government from the time of Christ is born till forevermore. He does not say there will be a break in it for almost 2,000 years and then I will restore it through Joseph Smith.

Eph 3:21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

(Paul declares here to God be the glory in the church and in Jesus forever.)

Luke 1:32-33 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

1 Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.

(We have seen an angel declares Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom would have no end. Paul declares that the kingdom of God consist of power. Are we to believe that the Lord had no power upon the earth for almost 2000 years and there was a multiple generation gap of Jesus' reign over the house of Jacob?)

Matt 16:18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

The Rock is Christ

1 Cor 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

Here Christ church is even stronger than the gates of Hell. Nothing or no one can break it not even for a short time. God the Father, Jesus in the flesh, an Angel and Paul all indicated there would be no end to Christ's church. They said nothing about there being a break in it. So why restore something that is not gone? All throughout the judgment in the book of Isaiah God leaves a remnant, a few people. In Genesis chapters 6-9 when God flooded the world he saved Noah and his family. When God wiped out Sodom & Gomorra He spared Lot and his daughters (Gen.chapter 18-19). Elijah thought he was the only one left who served God yet God said he reserved 7,000 others (1 Kings 19:13-18) God has always been capable of keeping his followers from being wiped out and He promised to do so.

Then comes along Joseph Smith who says the church is gone and says God gave him a whole new revelation. Joseph then builds a church that does not believe the doctrines found in the Bible.

B. The restored Church implies that it used to exist before.

It is difficult to prove that something did not exist 2,000 years ago. It is much easier to prove what did exist! The major doctrines of the Christian Church can be shown in writings outside of the bible.

The L.D.S teachings cannot be shown to be taught by anyone in the first Century including the writers of the New Testament!

For this part I will include what was taught by Christians in the first century. My question is: If the L.D.S Church is a "restored church"; where is any evidence that these things were ever taught by anyone prior to the proven false prophet Joseph Smith?

Following is the evidence that Christian Doctrine was indeed taught in the first century following the original Apostles. These are the same beliefs that are taught in the Christian Church today.

ARE THE BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH TODAY THE SAME AS THE BELIEFS IN THE FIRST CENTURY?

As time passes by many things seem to evolve or change. If something about God or salvation is true today shouldn't it be true for all time since God does not change? (Mal.3:6) It is true that if you take a story and verbally pass it down through a hundred people or so the story will more than likely not be the same at the end as it was when it started. If the foundational doctrines of the church are not the same today as in the beginning then we no longer possess the truth as Jesus and the Apostles taught. This is why we must constantly go to the scriptures for answers. The bible is our written record of the truth revealed to us by God. We are told in the bible that we should study the scriptures and also that the Holy Spirit can teach us.

2 Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)

1 Jn 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (NAS)

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (NAS)

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (NAS)

1 Cor 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. (NAS)

This same Holy Spirit that will teach us as we study to rightly divide the word of truth has also taught the people in the beginning of the church. These people at the beginning of the church also had the advantage of being able to ask the Apostles what was meant in the letters they wrote that are now our New Testament. For example Polycarp and Ignatius were both men that studied under the Apostle John who wrote what we call the gospel according to John as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and the book of Revelation. We have records of what Polycarp and Ignatius wrote. When you review what was written by people that studied under the Apostles and then men that later studied under them you can see how they interpreted the scriptures. Here is where we find confirmation that the church today is indeed teaching the same basic truths that

were taught in the beginning of the church. There are some minor doctrines taught in churches today that are not found in the writings of these men. For example the teaching that the church will be ruptured before the Great Tribulation is not confirmed in the writings of any of these men. However the foundational doctrines which the many Christian denominations hold in common are confirmed in their writings.

The foundational doctrines that I am referring to are:

1. The reliability of scripture.
2. The doctrine of the Trinity declaring that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God and that these three persons are one singular God.
3. Jesus died for our sins on a cross.
4. Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and he will return.
5. Salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned.
6. Satan and Hell are not a myth, but a reality.

I would like to share some quotes by early Christian writers concerning these foundational beliefs. The quotes are found in THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS translations of The Writings of the Fathers down to a.d. 325. The Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., James Donaldson, LL.D., Editors. These quotes are copied from the CD Rom version put out by Logos Research Systems, Inc. The information below about the people quoted can be found in: A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, Editor- David W. Bercot.

The people quoted are:

1. Clement of Rome: 1st century, c. 95. Bishop of the church in Rome believed to be a companion of Peter and Paul (Phil.4:3)
2. Clement of Alexandria c.150-215. Teacher at Alexandria, Egypt who was in charge of a school there.
3. Hippolytus: c. 170-236. A leading Presbyter in the church of Rome.
4. Hermas: Origen believed this is who Paul mentioned in Romans 16:14 Although some think he was the brother of Pius a 2nd Century Bishop of Rome.
5. Ignatius: c. 35-107. Bishop of the church of Antioch and a disciple of John.
6. Irenaeus: c.130-200. Bishop of the church of Lyons. He listened to Polycarp preach when he was young.
7. Polycarp: c.69-156. Bishop of the church at Smyrna and a disciple of John.
8. Justin Martyr: c. 100-165. Philosopher who converted to Christianity and became a strong evangelist and apologist.
9. Tertullian: c.160-230. Early apologist and once a presbyter in the church at Cathage.

1. The reliability of scripture. (Adobe Vol. 1, pg.13, ch XLV)

Clement of Rome. Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians Chapter XLV.

"Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them."

(In the same book in Chapter XLVII)

"Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit,"

Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, The Stromata, or Miscellanies Book IV, Chapter I

...having demonstrated that the Scriptures which we believe are valid from their omnipotent authority, we shall be able to go over them consecutively, and to show thence to all the heresies one God and Omnipotent Lord to be truly preached by the law and the prophets, and besides by the blessed Gospel.

(In the same Volume in book V Chapter XIII)

"Let him know that it was God Himself that promulgated the Scriptures by His Son. And he, who announces what is his own, is to be believed. "No one," says the Lord, "hath known the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him."

Tertulian, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, On Prayer, Chapter XXII

"The apostle-guided, of course, by the same Spirit by whom, as all the divine Scripture, so that book Genesis, was drawn up-has used the selfsame word in writing"

2. The doctrine of the Trinity. (Adobe vol.1, pg.98)

Ignatius, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians Ch.2

"Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour."

Tertullian, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas Chapter XXV.

"What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called "another Comforter," indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, "He shall receive of mine," says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father's. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are, one essence, not one Person, as it is said, "I and my Father are One," in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number."

The following definition of "Paraclete" is by Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th edition.

Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c): holy spirit

Tertullian here is referring to John 14: 9-16 where Jesus said he would ask of the Father and he would send the Holy Spirit also referred to as another Comforter in the King James Version of the Bible. We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence. Tertullian just defined the Trinity. Compare what Tertullian said to the following from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

TRINITY: The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Hippolytus, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume V, Against the Heresy of One Noetus.

"Acknowledge God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus the Son of God, who, being God, became man, to whom also the Father made all things subject, Himself excepted, and the Holy Spirit; and that these, therefore, are three. But if he desires to learn how it is shown still that there is one God, let him know that His power is one. As far as regards the power, therefore, God is one. But as far as regards the economy there is a threefold manifestation, as shall be proved afterwards when we give account of the true doctrine.

2a. Jesus is God

Ignatius, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, Ch. 3

"For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory].

Clement of Alexandria, The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2, Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor, Book 1, Chapter II

"Now, O you, my children, our Instructor is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of man, stainless, the minister of His Father's will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father's right hand, and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless."

2b. The Holy Spirit is God

Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, III.-From the Catena on Luke, Edited by Corderius.

"Luke 3:22. God here assumed the "likeness" not of a man, but "of a dove," because He wished, by a new apparition of the Spirit in the likeness of a dove, to declare His simplicity and majesty."

Luke 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

Tertullian, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Against Praxeas, Chapter XXX

"He will come again on the clouds of heaven, just as He appeared when He ascended into heaven. Meanwhile He has received from the Father the promised gift, and has shed it forth, even the Holy Spirit-the Third Name in the Godhead, and the Third Degree of the Divine Majesty; the Declarer of the One Monarchy of God, but at the same time the Interpreter of the Economy, to every one who hears and receives the words of the new prophecy; and "the Leader into all truth," such as is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the mystery of the doctrine of Christ.

3. Jesus died for our sins on a cross.

Polycarp, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, Ch. 1

"Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] "whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave." "In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; " into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that "by grace ye are saved, not of works," but by the will of God through Jesus Christ."

In this same section in Chapter VII Polycarp mentions the cross.

"For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; " and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan"

(To understand what is meant by "Christ has come in the flesh read 1 Jn. 4:2 & Jn.1:1 &14)

Ignatius, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, Ch.VI

Let no man deceive himself. Unless he believes that Christ Jesus has lived in the flesh, and shall confess His cross and passion, and the blood which He shed for the salvation of the world, he shall not obtain eternal life, whether he be a king, or a priest, or a ruler, or a private person, a master or a servant, a man or a woman."

This salvation is through Christ alone.

Hermas, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Similitude Ninth, Chapter XII

"A man cannot otherwise enter into the kingdom of God than by the name of His beloved Son. "

4. Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and he will return.

Clement of Rome, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, Chapter XXIV

"Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead."

Tertullian, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On the Resurrection of the Flesh,

Ch. XLVIII "He "died according to the Scriptures," and "that He was buried according to the Scriptures," no otherwise than in the flesh, you will also allow that it was in the flesh that He was raised from the dead. For the very same body which fell in death, and which lay in the sepulchre, did also rise again;"

Justin Martyr, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection, Chapter IX "Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh?" And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, "Ye have not yet faith, see that it is I; " and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He did eat honey-comb and fish. And when He had thus shown them that there is truly a resurrection of the flesh, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as He had said that our dwelling-place is in heaven), "He was taken up into heaven while they beheld," as He was in the flesh.

Justin Martyr, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Dialogue of Justin, Chapter CX
"O unreasoning men! understanding not what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory,

Irenaeus, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 4, Ch. XXXIII "All the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity, and sat upon the foal of an ass, and was a stone rejected by the builders, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek; while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father's fold the children who were scattered abroad, and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, and came down to them that He might deliver them: but the second in which He will come on the clouds, bringing on the day which burns as a furnace? and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth? and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire."
(Christ is coming on clouds Mt.24:30, Acts 1:9-11, Rev.1:7)

5. Salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned.

Ignatius, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, Ch.X
"Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. For "if Thou, Lord, shalt mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"
" Let us therefore prove ourselves worthy of that name which we have received." (Ps. 130:3)

Irenaeus, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book I, Chapter 2
"As far as concerned the apostasy, indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously. For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it;"

Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, The Stromata, or Miscellanies Book I, Chapter VII
"But Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith." It is therefore of no advantage to them after the end of life, even if they do good works now, if they have not faith."

Polycarp, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, Ch.1
Our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] "whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave." "In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; " into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that "by grace ye are saved, not of works," but by the will of God through Jesus Christ. (Eph.2:8-9)

6. Satan and Hell are not a myth, but a reality.

Hermas, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Book Second-Commandments, Commandment Twelfth, Chapter V "The devil is hard, and holds sway over them." "He cannot," says he, "hold sway over the servants of God, who with all their heart place their hopes in Him. The devil can wrestle against these, overthrow them he cannot. If, then, ye resist him, he will be conquered, and flee in disgrace from you. As many, therefore," says he, "as are empty, fear the devil, as possessing power. " (James 4:7)

Irenaeus, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 3, Ch.XXIII
"And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever: lasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels;" indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend." (Mt.25:41)

The church does indeed teach the same foundational doctrines as the early church. The next key factor is do we really believe it? Lots of people may believe these truths intellectually, but is it really in our hearts? Men of strong faith such as the original disciples and others after them were willing to die martyrs for their faith. They believed these truths to be more than a doctrine, but rather these truths were an absolute reality.

The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations

Evaluating our faith: How shall I depend on Him for raising my body from the dust; and saving my soul at last; if I distrust Him for a crust of bread, towards my preservation.

JOSEPH HALL

Famous Quotes

There are many great truths which we do not deny, and which nevertheless we do not fully believe.

J. W. Alexander

Belief is a wise wager. Granted that faith cannot be proved, what harm will come to you if you gamble on its truth and it proves false?...If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation, that He exists.

Blaise Pascal

All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death.
Author Unknown

I believe in Christ as I believe in the rising sun-not that I can see it, but that by it I can see everything. Author Unknown

He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend, must have a very long head or a very short creed.
Colton

I am not afraid of those tender and scrupulous consciences who are ever cautious of professing and believing too much; if they are sincerely wrong, I forgive their errors and respect their integrity.-The men I am afraid of are those who believe everything, subscribe to everything, and vote for everything.
Shipley

Some believe all that parents, tutors, and kindred believe.-They take their principles by inheritance, and defend them as they would their estates, because they are born heirs to them.
Watts

Point 2. The true church must bear the name of Jesus

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. (NAS)

This scripture given was in the letter you sent me. First of all I would like to point out that the context given here has nothing to do with the name of the Church!

Jesus is indeed the head of the Church. There is certainly nothing wrong with having the name of Jesus in the name of the Church. However where in this verse or any other verse in the Bible does it tell us what to name the Church? When we look at the beginning of the letters in the New Testament it would seem as though the Apostles themselves did not address know that the Name of Jesus should be used in the title of the Church. Following are a couple of examples.

1 Cor 1:1-2 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth,

2 Cor 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

Gal 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

The Church was first referred to by some as "The way" or "This Way"

Acts 9:2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Acts 22:4 "And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

Acts 24:14 "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets;

Acts 24:22 But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case."

In Summary Jesus is the head of the Church. There is nothing in scripture directing us what to name the Church. Historically it was first called "The Way"

Point 3. The true church must have a foundation of Apostles and prophets.

Eph 2:19-20 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (KJV)

The above was in the letter you sent me.

The Church indeed is built upon this foundation with the Apostles and prophets.

Jesus Christ is indeed the very cornerstone of the Church. This text does not tell us that throughout church history we should continue to have new Apostles, Prophets or a new Christ.

Point 4. The true church must have the same organization as Christ's Church.

Eph 4:11-14

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (KJV)

The verse just quoted was in the letter you sent me for point #4
I would like to point out that the L.D.S Church is not patterned after the original Church.
For example in the L.D.S Church young boys become Deacons at 12 years of age.

1 Tim 3:12 Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

Twelve-year-old boys even in the first century did not already have their own wives and children. As I will show in Point 5. The early Church did not claim to follow in the order of the priesthood which God had done away with.

Point 5. The true Church must claim divine authority.

Heb 5:4-10

4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee";

6 just as He says also in another passage "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
(NAS)

This is the verses supplied for point 5 in the letter you sent me.

Jesus was indeed declared a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find anybody else receiving the Melchizedek priesthood.

PRIESTHOOD

To the Mormon the matter of priesthood authority is very important. It is believed that without the priesthood authority certain acts such as baptism are meaningless. They claim that the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood were restored and exist only within the Mormon Church. Furthermore they claim that the same organization that existed in the primitive Church prevails now in the L.D.S church. The problem is that that the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church as we see in the New Testament. Added to this according to the Bible the Aaronic priesthood after the order of Aaron properly referred to as the Levitical priesthood became obsolete. This is due to the complete fulfillment of the priesthood by Jesus Christ dying on the cross and being our only mediator with God the Father. Furthermore the Melchizedek priesthood is only stated to be in existence now in Jesus Christ. Jesus is said to hold this office forever. Therefore we have no need for this priesthood to be passed to a successor since Jesus lives forever.

Following are some references from the Mormons showing their view of the priesthood.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.3, PRIESTHOOD

The word "priesthood" has several meanings for Latter-day Saints:

1. Priesthood is power, the power of God, a vital source of eternal strength and energy delegated to men to act in all things for the well-being of mankind, both in the world and out of it (DS 3:80; Romney, p. 43).
2. Priesthood is authority, the exclusive right to act in the name of God as his authorized agents and to perform ordinances for the purpose of opening certain spiritual blessings to all individuals.
3. Priesthood is the right and responsibility to preside within the organizational structure of the Church, but only in a manner consistent with the agency of others.
4. Sometimes the word priesthood is used to refer to the men of the Church in general (as in "the priesthood will meet in the chapel").

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.494

Priesthood is only in the restored Church. There is no priesthood anywhere else today than in this restored Church. There is priestcraft, but no priesthood

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie p.140 "the same organization that existed in the primitive Church prevails now. (Sixth Article of Faith.)"

**Mormon missionary handbook,
A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators, pg.15.**

"Elder: Why is the Priesthood so important?

"Brown: Because a man must have it to do those things.

"Elder: He certainly must. Suppose a priest or minister baptizes without the priesthood, what does that mean in the sight of the Lord?

"Brown: It doesn't mean anything.

"Elder: Why is that?

"Brown: Because he would lack the necessary authority.

"Elder: Right. So even though a minister might be sincere, unless he has the priesthood, will the Lord recognize a baptism performed by him?

" Brown: No.

In the Bible Jesus once rebuked John for having a belief similar to this.

Luke 9:49-50 And John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

As previously stated the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church in the New Testament. For example the L.D.S Church is led by First Presidency, The Bible says nothing about a First Presidency. Even if we accept that there should today be 12 Apostles this still presents the problem that the L.D.S Church has 3 men in addition to the Council of the 12. How is this patterned after the primitive church?

In the L.D.S Church 12 year old boys are ordained Deacons. But in the Bible we find.

1 Tim 3:12 *Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.*

Ironically even the Mormons own scripture would suggest that Deacons should be older than 12 years of age.

D&C 84:111 *And behold, the high priests should travel, and also the elders, and also the lesser priests; but the deacons and teachers should be appointed to watch over the church, to be standing ministers unto the church.*

L.D.S scripture claims that an Elder is an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Although the Melchizedek priesthood is never associated with the office of an elder in the bible.

Doctrine & Covenants 107:7 " The office of an Elder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek."

It is interesting that although the Mormons claim that the priesthood is absolutely necessary none of the leaders in Mormon Church had it in the beginning.

The following is a statement by Joseph Smith concerning a conference held in June, 1831, **History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.15, p.175** "the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders."

This is confirmed by John Whitmer. He was the Church Historian.

John Whitmer Book of John Whitmer, typescript, BYU-A, p.8-9

June 3, 1831, a general conference was called, and a blessing promised, if the elders were faithful, and humble before him. Therefore, the elders assembled from the East and the West, from the North and the South. And also many members. Conference was opened by prayer and exhortation by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Revelator. After the business of the Church was attended to according to the covenants. **The Lord made manifest to Joseph that it was necessary that such of the elders as were considered worthy, should be ordained to the High Priesthood.** The spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner. And prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Salmanasar King of Israel [should be Assyria], to prepare them for their return, from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written. After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight [and ordained him] to the High Priesthood after the Holy Order of God. And the spirit fell upon Lyman, and he prophesied, concerning the coming of Christ, he said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven, with a shout, with all the holy angels with him.

If the Melchizedek priesthood is really necessary it is certainly odd that the Elders were able to function from the organization of the church until June 1831 without it.

The historian B.H Roberts made the following admission concerning the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood.

B.H. Roberts, The Seventy's Course in Theology, Second Year, p.218

The Line of the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood: The promise to confer upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood was fulfilled; but as there is no definite account of the event in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for matter of that, in any of our annuals, the evidences of the fact of their ordination to the higher or Melchizedek priesthood promised them by John the Baptist, are presented now, together with a consideration of the place where, and the time when, the great event occurred.

One should keep in mind that the Melchizedek Priesthood could only be passed on by someone who had it. Only Jesus and Melchizedek are ever said to have had it in the Bible. Neither Jesus, nor Melchizedek are said to have been the ones to restore it to the L.D.S Church.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.10, p.371-372 Heber C. Kimball, November 29, 1864

"Joseph was a kind-hearted, obedient, good boy. He was fourteen years of age the third day of last April, and was an excellent scholar; Joseph was never cross, he was always pleasant to all persons. Eight years ago he came near dying; I was impressed to ordain him a High Priest. I ordained him, and I do know that had a saving effect upon the boy"

Notice that we are told he is 14 years old. 8 years before this he ordained a High Priest. That means this boy Joseph was ordained a High Priest at 6 years old. This is not patterned after the primitive church as claimed in McConkie's book Mormon Doctrine and the 6th Article of Faith.

The fact that the structure is not patterned after the primitive church is only the beginning of the problems. Let's look at what the Bible says in Hebrews Chapters 7-10. It says the Levitical priesthood which is after the order of Aaron ended. Our High Priest after the order Melchizedek is Jesus Christ and nobody else has this priesthood. The only other priesthood mentioned in the Bible after the priesthood ended is called a holy or royal priesthood. This is found in 1 Peter 1:23-2:9 in the context born again believers have this priesthood.

First I will start with Hebrews and Genesis. What ended here in the book of Hebrews is the Levitical Priesthood after the order of Aaron. There is nothing called the Aaronic priesthood in the Bible. In fact the word Aaronic is not in the Bible. The word Melchizedek or Melchisedec as in the KJV is only found in Gen.14:18, Ps.110:4 and the book of Hebrews 5:6&10, 6:20, 7:1,10,11,15,17. The one in Psalm is a prophetically speaking concerning Jesus. In Genesis we have an actual person called Melchizedek.

Nothing is said about Melchizedek's origin in Genesis. We have no mention of his Mom or Dad. This is strange because Genesis is a book of families. When we see a man mentioned who is important in the genealogical line (as this man Melchizedek seems to be) his Dad and Mom are mentioned "he is the son of so and so" or these are the generations of so and so". But we do not have the generations of Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that the reason there is no record of Melchizedek's family line is because the priesthood of Jesus Christ in its inception is after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood of Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek in the practical sense as Jesus is our mediator Heb.9:15. Just as the priest in the Old Testament acted as a mediator by entered the holy of holies to offer sacrifice for the peoples sins. Jesus offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins and is the mediator between Christians and the Father. Christ in his priesthood does perpetually what was done in the Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron. In his person Jesus had no beginning or ending of days Jn.1:1, Micah 5:2, Rev. 1:7-8, 1:17-18, 21:6, 22:13-16. Jesus has always existed.

In the person Melchizedek we have a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had no beginning or ending of days and neither did Melchizedek.

Heb 7:1-3 (1)For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, (2) to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.(3) Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.

We are told here Melchizedek is a priest perpetually. The same is true of Jesus Heb 7:17 *For it is witnessed of Him "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."* Another contrast is Melchizedek is king of peace Heb.7:2. Jesus is called prince of peace. Melchizedek was called a great man Heb.7:4, Jesus certainly fits this description also. These 2 Melchizedek who seems to be a picture of Christ and Jesus are the only ones in the Bible to hold the Melchizedek priesthood.

Why do you suppose Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine in Gen. 14:18?

Gen 14:18-20 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all.

I believe it is because as it says in 1 Cor 11:26 *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* The Sacrament is taken today in symbolism of the Lords death. It stands to reason that it was taken then as a symbolic gesture of what was to come. (Christ death for all sins) The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest for the world today. The Lord Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek not after the order of Aaron. The Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron was for Israel and the sacrifices were done away with. There is no more need for sacrifice because the blood of Jesus covers all sin 1 John 1:7.

There are some verses I want to comment on. I feel that they are important. You should read Hebrews chapters 7-10 several times to become familiar with the context. It tells us Jesus Christ is our High Priest and the Levitical Priesthood or the Aaronic Priesthood, as the L.D.S would call it ended. There is no more need for it because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice and he takes its place as our mediator. The writer of Hebrews makes a comparison and contrast of the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood after the order of Aaron.

The text is from the New American Standard Version and my commentary concerning the text is in the boxes.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 7

- 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.
3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.
4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.
5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

Verse 4 Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. He recognized that Melchizedek was above him and that he was the priest of the most high God.

Verse 5 The sons of Levi who were descended from Abraham collected tithes from their brethren. But Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This shows us that positional Melchizedek was superior to Aaron and his family.

- 6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises.
7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.
8 And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.
9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,
10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.
11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?
12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

Verse 8 "in this case" refers to the Levitical priest, "in that case" refers to Melchizedek and his priesthood.
(here & there in KJV)

Verse 11 indicates to us that the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood as L.D.S would say, was incomplete. (It never brought perfection, complete communion with God. It never gave redemption and acceptance before God to the people. Therefore we need Christ.)

Verse 12 The change in law. We are not under Mosaic law. The Mosaic law and the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood go together. They offered blood sacrifices we do not Christ is our Passover 1 Cor.5:7 his sacrifice is what Christians claim for atonement for sins.

13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is witnessed of Him "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath

21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever'");

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Verses 13-14 Jesus came from the tribe of Judah therefore he could never have been a priest here on earth. Only certain Levites could hold the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood in the Old Testament. The priesthood however was changed and Christ is after the order of Melchizedek.

Verse 15 This priest to rise in the order of Melchizedek is a fulfillment of the prophecy in P.110:4

Verse 16&17 Christ became a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Since he rose from the dead he has endless life.

Verse 18 The Levitical system was faulty. It never gave mankind what he needed. Its weakness was man himself as we see in verse 28

23 And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing,

24 but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

Verse 23 In other words the men in Levitical or Aaronic priesthood would die.

Verse 24 Jesus is our High Priest now and he will never die. So his priesthood last forever.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 8

1 Now the main point in what has been said is this we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.

4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

Verse 1-3 The main point in what has been said is a priest must have something to offer. Jesus sacrificed himself once for all time. In verse 2 we see man made a tabernacle built by hands of man. This tabernacle heaven was not made by man.

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers On the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.

10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Verse 6 Christ mediates in a much better covenant. (Christ blood is at the base of this new covenant)

Verse 7 If the first covenant (the Levitical system or Aaronic Priesthood) had been faultless there would be no need for the new covenant.

Verse 8 God found fault with this system and declared there would come a time he would establish a new and better covenant.

Verse 10 The new covenant is not the Mosaic law but the law is found in the hearts and minds of his people.

- 11 "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.
- 12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."
- 13 When He said, "A new covenant " He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Verse 11-12 He will remember their sins no more. Why? Because Christ paid for them on the cross.

Verse 11 says "Know the Lord" to even come to the Lord then the people had to go through the priest to God. Man now goes straight through Jesus our High Priest who made a sacrifice in our behalf that last forever. (of course you must accept this sacrifice Jn.3:16-17)

Verse 13 Notice the word obsolete. What is obsolete? The context in chapter 7-8 was what you call the Aaronic priesthood this is obsolete. The Levitical system that required us to go through the priest or priesthood to come to God is obsolete. The KJV on this verse reads "nI that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

The Aaronic priesthood decayed, waxed old and vanished away. It is now obsolete.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 9

- 1 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.
- 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.
- 3 And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,
- 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant.
- 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.
- 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship,
- 7 but into the second only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.
- 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing,
- 9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,
- 10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.
- 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;
- 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
- 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,
- 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Chapter 9 Verses 1-10 explain the earthly priesthood.

Verses 11-14 explains Christ priesthood. Notice verse 12, "once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you."

21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.

26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Verse 15 Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 10

1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.

7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.'"

8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them (which are offered according to the Law),

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them," He then says

17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Verses 16-18 Notice the New Covenant is not being under the law of the Old Testament. This is different.

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

END OF CHAPTER

So here is what we have, the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic Law ended. They were replaced because they were not complete. Man had to go through a priest to God and the priest had to continually offer sacrifices which were not complete or sufficient. Christ offered himself once for all time and his priesthood is after the order of the Melchidezek which is everlasting. Jesus is our High Priest forever.

The Levitical or Aaronic priesthood passed away. Jesus Christ who still is our High Priest took its place when he offered his sacrifice in our behalf once and for all time.

What need is there to restore then what God done away with?

The Priesthood's purpose was for a way in which man could come to God. For this there had to be a blood offering Hebrews 9:22. Well Christ done this once for all time. I would like to remind you that only the Levites could hold the priesthood. (All Mormons are not Levites)

Paul mentions the New Covenant in 2 Cor 3:6 "who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life".

The new covenant is the message of the grace in Christ.

Matt 26:28 "for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."

The letter kills but the spirit gives life. The letter stands for the whole Mosaic law. It kills because in and of its self it could not give life.

Acts 13:39 "and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

The law was to define sin and make man conscious of it, this made man legally guilty.

Gal 3:21-25 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

1 Tim 1:9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers

The spirit by contrast gives life to believers. Man cannot live the law no matter how hard he tries. This is why we need to rely on the blood of Christ and his grace.

The veil that tore in the temple at the time of Christ death Mat. 27:51 did separate the holy of holies from the rest of the temple EX.26:36-37, Heb.9:3.

This veil was ripped from top to bottom. This signified that this new and living way was now open for man to come to God. Heb.10:20 & Eph.2:11-12. This is another good example of the Aaronic priesthood ending. Realizing that the purpose of the priesthood was through sacrifices in the temple to have a mediator, a High Priest by which we could come to God. What need would there be to restore this?

Jesus said

I am the true vine

I am the vine you are the branches John 15:1-5

I am the way the truth and the life..... John 14:6

I am the resurrection and the life..... John 11:25

I am the good shepherd John 10:11-14

I am the bread of life John 6:35-48

I am the light of the world John 8:12

I am the door John 10:7-9

John 3:16 It seems to me that Jesus is the way to eternal life with God not a church, priesthood, baptism or anything else. Jesus said he "I am the way" he did not say some church is the way.

Col 2:8-10 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority

Since I am complete in Christ why do I need anything else? There are two more things I mention. It is maintained that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic priesthood from John the Baptist on May 15, 1829. The problem I see with this is I do not see where John the Baptist ever had the priesthood in scripture. No where do you see him doing any temple duties or anything of a priest.

Also I want to point out that in Hebrews 7:24 the word "permanently" in the NAS and "unchangeable" in the KJV.

Heb 7:24 but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

This word from the Greek carries a note of finality. Strong's definition of Greek words says the following: 531 aparabatos (ap-ar-ab'-at-os); from 1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of 3845; not passing away, i.e. **untransferable** (perpetual): KJV unchangeable.

Thayer's definition of Greek words says the following: 531 aparabatos-

1) unviolated, not to be violated, inviolable

2) unchangeable and therefore **not liable to pass to a successor**

My question is if this Melchizedek priesthood is un-transferable and not liable to pass to a successor, how could the L.D.S church have it?

Let's not forget the only place you will find the word "priesthood" in the New Testament is Hebrews 7:5,11,12,14,24 & 1 Peter 2:5,9. I also want to point out that whenever you see the word "ordained" in the New Testament it does not say anybody was ordained to the priesthood. They were ordained to preach or witness etc. In Hebrews 8:3 it mentions priesthood with it but it is talking about the High Priest of the Old Testament. In Acts 14:23 it says they were ordained Elders but this is not Priesthood it is a position of leadership in the church. No where in the New Testament do you see Elders, Bishops or Deacons receiving the priesthood by the laying on of hands. This is a Mormon concept it does not come from the Bible.

In 1 Peter 2:5 & 9 we find a holy or a royal priesthood. Not a Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood.

1 Pet 2:5 "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

How are we living stones?

1 Pet 1:23 "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God."

Notice in the context here this is who is being talked to. These people who are born again are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. You will recall that after Peter's confession Matt 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said to him "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" The name Peter means Rock. Jesus was saying to him in effect, you are going to be a little stone a pebble, but on this foundation stone (Christ 1Cor.3:11& 10:4) I am going to build my church. Jesus Christ is the Corner stone of the foundation 1 Peter 2:6. I believe Peter understood Jesus in this way because he (Peter) said "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house" When you are born again you become a child of God and you become part of this spiritual house. Born again believers are the church and are called the body of Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3 These people that Peter was talking to in 1 Peter where the holy and royal priesthood are mentioned are born again. The only sense in which anyone will have a holy or royal priesthood is to be born again.

There are two verses in the Old Testament that may still confuse some.

Num 25:11-13 (KJV) Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

Exod 40:15 (KJV) And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

The question is how could they have had "an everlasting priesthood" ,if in fact the priesthood came to an end?

Phinehas was Aaron's grandson and because the Lord was pleased with him the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. As you are already well aware the Levitical priesthood ends in the book of Hebrews. So this leaves the question how can it be an everlasting priesthood and then come to an end?

The answer lies within the meaning and use of the Hebrew word used here in Ex.40:15 & Num. 25:13. More often than not the word "everlasting" is used in the way that we would expect. That it is something that continues forever, but this is not always the case. First let us look at 4 different sources as to the meaning of this Hebrew word.

Then we will look at some bible verses where this same Hebrew word is used. You can verify this by using your Strong's Concordance.

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

EVER, EVERLASTING

`olam ^5769^, "eternity; remotest time; perpetuity." This word has cognates in Ugaritic, Moabite, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic, and Akkadian. It appears about 440 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods.

First, in a few passages the word means "eternity" in the sense of not being limited to the present. Thus, in <Eccl. 3:11> we read that God had bound man to time and given him the capacity to live "above time" (i. e., to remember yesterday, plan for tomorrow, and consider abstract principles); yet He has not given him divine knowledge: "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

.....**the word is used hyperbolically meaning "for a long time":** "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself " This word may include all the time between the ancient beginning and the present:

Brown-Driver-Briggs'-Defenition

5769 `owlam or `olam-

long duration, antiquity, futurity, forever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world

a) ancient time, long time (used of the past)

b) (used of the future)

1) forever, always

2) continuous existence, perpetual

3) everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity

Strong's Definition

5769 `owlam (o-lawm');

or `olam (o-lawm'); from 5956; properly, concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always:

KJV-- alway (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+without end). Compare 5331, 5703.

(from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database)

EVERLASTING

(ev-er-last'-ing) (olam, `adh; aidios, aionios): "Everlasting," in strictness, is that which endures forever; either that which has no beginning and will have no end (in which sense it is applicable to God only), or that which, having a beginning, will have no end, but henceforth will exist forever (thus of beings created for immortality; see IMMORTALITY). Figuratively also the term is applied to objects of impressive stability and long duration, as mountains, hills (e.g. <Gen 49:26; Hab 3:6>).

Looking at these 4 sources of this Hebrew word we can see that the word "everlasting" can and often does mean literally forever. However this is not always the case in every instance. So next look at the Bible to see where this same Hebrew word is used in a way that is not literally forever. You can use you Strong's Concordance for verification that these instances are indeed the same Hebrew word.

In the next 2 verses we read of the everlasting hills using the same Hebrew word.

Gen 49:26 (KJV) The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Hab 3:6 (KJV) He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.

Are the hills going to literally last forever? According to Peter they will come to an end.

2 Pet 3:10 (KJV) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

So what we have here is the same Hebrew word in two instances being used to describe an "everlasting" priesthood. Then this same Hebrew word is used to describe "everlasting" hills or mountains. The New Testament tells us the Priesthood came to an end and it also tells us the mountains will come to an end. The Hebrew word by definition can be used for eternity or an extended period of time. The priesthood and the mountains are examples where the Hebrew word describes an extended period of time.

In Summary Phinehas was Aaron's grandson and because the Lord was pleased with him the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. In this case the word "everlasting" indicated a long period of time. This was actually a few thousand years, but it did come to an end in the book of Hebrews when Jesus paid the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. After the Levitical Priesthood ended all we have is the Melchizedek priesthood which only Jesus Christ holds and that which is referred to as a holy priesthood or a royal priesthood which when you examine the context belongs to born again believers.

Point 6. The true church must have no paid ministry.

Isa 45:13 "I have aroused him in righteousness, and I will make all his ways smooth; He will build My city, and will let My exiles go free, without any payment or reward," says the LORD of hosts. (NAS)

1 Pet 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (NAS)

The above verses were given for point 6 in the letter you sent me.

Although the majority of L.D.S members are not paid this is not true for some of the leadership of the church. However that is not the point. Does the bible really teach us that ALL paid ministry is wrong? Certainly some have been called to serve the Lord outside of the realm of paid ministry. Does the Bible forbid All paid ministry as point 6 declares?

1 Cor 9:5-14

5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops}

11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?

12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use **this right**, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar?

14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. (NAS)

1 Tim 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (NAS)

Luke 10:7 "And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (NAS)

Point 7. The true church must baptize by immersion. Matt.3:13-16

The Christian Church agrees with and does not dispute this point.

Point 8. The true church must bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Acts 8:14-17

14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of

God, they sent them Peter and John,

15 who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (NAS)

The above verse was sent for point 8 with the letter you sent me.

This is indeed an example of some who received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. This is actually a good example of why we need to examine all of scripture concerning a subject. The Bible does record things that took place in the early church.

We do not however follow every example that we read about. For example Jesus wore sandals (Mk.1:7). That does not mean that all of his followers should wear sandals.

Judas was one of his disciples and he went out and hanged himself (Mt.27:5). This does not mean that we should hang ourselves. Some things are merely a record of what took place. Other things are instructions for us to follow.

Example

2 Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)

This verse is not a record of what took place in history. Rather it is an instruction of what should be taking place.

Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (NAS)

This verse also is a command instructing us what to do not just what had taken place.

The laying on of hands is not the only way that anyone received the Holy Spirit.

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (NAS)

Acts 2:1-4

1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (NAS)

Acts 10:44-48

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

45 And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have **received the Holy Spirit** just as we did, can he?"

48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. (NAS)

Looking at these texts we can see that not everyone received the Holy Spirit in the same exact manner. The text show us that believers do receive the Holy Spirit, but they do not instruct us a manner in which we should do it. Rather it is left up to God and not man.

Point 9. The true church must practice divine healing.

Mark 3:14-15 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: (KJV)

The above text was in the letter you sent me for point 9

Here again this is a record of what did take place. Certainly healing still takes place in the church today. What is the most interesting about this to me is that growing up in the L.D.S Church I never seen healing taking place. It is kind of interesting that they should then declare it as one of the 17 points of the true church when it certainly is not a regular practice for the L.D.S church.

We are instructed to pray for the sick

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; (NAS)

Point 10. The true church must teach that God and Jesus Christ are separate and distinct individuals. (Verses supplied in letter were John 17:11 & John 20:17)

Actually I would take this one step further. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are separate and distinct individual persons.

Most Mormons do not understand the Trinity. When we say Jesus is God they think we mean he is the Father. That is not the position of the Christian Church. Here is where the Trinity needs to be explained.

THE TRINITY

Historically the nature of God has been referred to as the Trinity. This means that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are 3 separate persons which constitute only one God. The word "*Trinity*" is not in the Bible. This simply is the name of a doctrine or idea that is taught in the Bible. Usually people that do not believe the doctrine of the Trinity define it incorrectly. Then they set out to prove that the false definition is un-biblical, which of course it is because they incorrectly defined it. Let me try to explain it as clear as I can. God the Father is called God, but this does not mean that he is Jesus, nor does it mean that he is the Holy Spirit. The Father is called God in Rom 1:7 *"to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ".* Jesus the Son is called God, but this does not mean that he is the Father nor does it mean he is the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called God in John 1:1&14

(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Notice this states that God became flesh. In the context this is Jesus. See also Phil.2:5-8)

John 20:27-29 *Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."* (Notice Jesus did not rebuke Peter when he called him Lord and God. The conclusion is Jesus is God the Son.)

The Holy Spirit is called God but this does not mean that he is the Father nor does it mean that he is Jesus. The Holy Spirit is called God In Acts 5:3-4 *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."*

(Notice Peter stated they lied to the Holy Spirit. Then in the next breath he states that this was God they lied to.)

Heb 3:7-11 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tried me by testing me, and saw My works for forty years. "Therefore **I** was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know **My** ways'; As I swore in My wrath, 'they shall not enter My rest.'"

(Notice we are told that the Holy Spirit is the one that says he was provoked and swore in his wrath "they shall not enter my rest".)

Ps 95:6-11 Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness; "When your fathers tested **me**, they tried **me**, though they had seen **My** work. "For forty years **I** loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know **My** ways. "Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest."

Here we are told that our Lord our maker is God. It is he that was provoked and swore in his wrath "they shall not enter into my rest". The conclusion is God the Holy Spirit said this. (See also Num 14:22-23) For a similar reference where we have God speaking in the Old Testament and in the New Testament it refers to the Holy Spirit as the speaker, compare Isaiah 6:8-10 with Acts 28:25-27.

We have just seen that the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy spirit are all called God. These 3 are all called God yet they are also 3 separate persons. They are not all the same person. One passage that clearly shows this is John 14:16-17. (Jesus is the one speaking here) *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you"*. This passage clearly shows they are 3 separate persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All 3 the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are called God and they are 3 separate persons. Yet the Bible does not teach that there are 3 Gods. There is only one God. These 3 Persons constitute only one God.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD.

Isa 44:6-8 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me. 'And who is like me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none."

Did you notice King of Israel and his Redeemer seem to be speaking of more than one? Then he says "I am the first and I am the last and there is no God besides Me" this is singular. Then he ask if there are any other Gods besides him and states that he (God) does not know of any! How can there be other Gods that even God himself knows nothing about?

Isa 43:10 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.

(This even states there will be no other Gods in the future.)

So what we have so far is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are 3 separate persons. All 3 persons are called God and there is only one God. We find this in creation also. All 3 are called the creator and there is only one creator.

THE FATHER IS CREATOR

Isa 45:18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else. (see also Isa 42:5 & 1 Cor.8:6)

JESUS IS CREATOR

Col 1:13-16 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- - all things have been created by Him and for Him.

(See also John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Corinthians 8:6)

THE SPIRIT IS CREATOR

Job 26:13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Gen 1:2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

(see also Ps.104:30)

GOD CREATED BY HIMSELF

Isa 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone.

He could not say he created "by myself" and "all alone" if the Father, Son & Holy Spirit were 3 separate Gods. To some people these verses would seem to be in conflict with each other. They are not however in conflict at all. The answer is these 3 persons constitute only one God.

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

We find further plurality in the one God in the Old Testament. For example:

Gen 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Notice "Us" & "Our" are plural. Notice also that "His" & "He" are singular. My point again is there is plurality in the one God. There is not 3 Gods, but rather 3 persons in the 1 God.

THE WHOLE TRINITY IN ONE PASSAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Isa 48:12-16

12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.

13 "Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together.

14 "Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he shall carry out His good pleasure on Babylon, and His arm shall be against the Chaldeans.

15 "I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and He will make his ways successful.

16 "Come near to me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit."

Notice verse 12 God is the speaker. The one who has called Israel. He states "I am He, I am the first, I am also the last" Notice "I" & "He" are singular.

Follow the context down and you will see that the speaker who is God and identifies himself as "I am He, I am the first, I am also the last" is also the same one speaking in verse 16. The context does not change speakers. Then this single person (God) speaking says "And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit." In this text God is speaking then he says the Lord God has sent me. Not only has he sent him but he also says "and His Spirit" What we have here is 3 separate persons in a singular God.

We find unity in the New Testament in the Trinity as well.

Matt 3:16-17 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, {and} coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

In these passages we can see all 3, Father, Son & Holy Spirit are separate and also in unity. We can see the Trinity in the birth of Christ as well.

Matt 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Matt 16:16-17 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Notice that which was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not called the Son of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called the Son of God. So here again we have all three. Jesus refers to God the Father as his father yet that which was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit.

Some people say the Trinity is hard to understand, so they cannot believe it. Whether it is hard to understand is not the point. The point is, does the Bible teach it? The fact is, the Bible does teach it. Should it surprise us that God is somewhat complex? I do not fully understand the law of gravity. But I know if I step off a cliff I will fall even if I do not understand or believe this law of gravity. The Bible teaches that there are 3 separate persons that constitute only one God therefore I believe it. I believe it because the Bible is the word of God.

The following are other comparisons, which would cause some to believe scripture conflicts until they recognize that there are 3 persons within the one God.

First, we will see that both the Father and Jesus are called the first and the last. How many, first and last, Alpha and Omega, beginning and the ends are there? The answer is there is only one. There is only one God Is.44:8.

GOD THE FATHER

Isa 41:4 "Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me.'

Isa 48:12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.

JESUS

Rev 1:7-8 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Jesus is the one coming with the clouds, Mt.24:30, 26:64, Mk.13:26, 14:62, 1 Th.4:17)

Rev 1:17-18 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Rev 22:13-16 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

Next we will see that your body is a temple of God, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and it is Christ that dwells in you. How can this be? ANSWER: These 3 persons make only one God.

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF GOD

2 Cor 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them" and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Cor 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (Jesus\God paid the price Acts 20:28)

CHRIST DWELLS IN YOU

Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Next we will see that God will not give his glory to another. Yet Jesus shared this glory with him. How can this be? ANSWER: They are one God.

Isa 42:8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images

John 17:5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

Who raised Jesus from the dead? The answer is God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all raised Jesus from the dead.

1 Cor 6:14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. (see also Acts 2:24, Acts 13:30, Romans 6:4)

John 2:19-21 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (see also John 10:17-18)

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. (see also 1 Peter 3:18)

What about accusations that the Trinity is a doctrine derived from the 3rd or 4th century?

One well known organization that teaches this misconception is the Watchtower Organization commonly referred to as the Jehovah Witnesses. It is easy to show that the doctrine known as the Trinity was not derived from the 3rd or 4th century. To do this we will simply quote someone who lived before that time period.

Tertullian was a Christian theologian who lived 155-220 A.D. The following quote by him can be found in Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas CH.25.

"What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called "another Comforter," indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, "He shall receive of mine," says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father's. **Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are, one essence**, not one Person, as it is said, "I and my Father are One," in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number."

The following definition of "**Paraclete**" is by Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th edition. *Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c): **holy spirit***

Tertullian here is referring to John 14: 9-16 where Jesus said he would ask of the Father and he would send the Holy Spirit also referred to as another Comforter in the King James Version of the Bible. We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence. Tertullian just defined the Trinity remember he lived 155-220 A.D.

Compare what Tertullian said to the following from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary. TRINITY The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (**divine nature or essence**). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We can go back even earlier than this. Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostle John who wrote the gospel of John, 1,2& 3rd John and the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Now Ignatius had the distinct advantage that he could actually ask John questions by what he meant in his writings We find that Ignatius also taught the Trinity and the Apostle John personally taught him.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I
The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians.
Chapter I.—Reason for Writing the Epistle.

BEING mindful of your love and of your zeal in Christ, which ye have manifested towards us, we thought it fitting to write to you, who display such a godly and spiritual love to the brethren, to put you in remembrance of your Christian course, “that ye all speak the same thing, being of one mind, thinking the same thing, and walking by the same rule of faith,” as Paul admonished you. For if there is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, “of whom are all things;” and one Lord Jesus Christ, our [Lord], “by whom are all things;” and also one Holy Spirit, who wrought in Moses, and in the prophets and apostles; and also one baptism, which is administered that we should have fellowship with the death of the Lord; and also one elect Church; there ought likewise to be but one faith in respect to Christ. For “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is through all, and in all.”

Chapter II.—Unity of the Three Divine Persons.

There is then one God and Father, and not two or three; One who is; and there is no other besides Him, the only true [God]. For “the Lord thy God,” saith [the Scripture], “is one Lord.” And again, “Hath not one God created us? Have we not all one Father? And there is also one Son, God the Word. For “the only-begotten Son,” saith [the Scripture], “who is in the bosom of the Father.” And again, “One Lord Jesus Christ.” And in another place, “What is His name, or what His Son’s name, that we may know?” And there is also one Paraclete. For “there is also,” saith [the Scripture], “one Spirit,” since “we have been called in one hope of our calling.” And again, “We have drunk of one Spirit,” with what follows. And it is manifest that all these gifts [possessed by believers] “worketh one and the self-same Spirit.” There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete. Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to “baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour

Not only is the Trinity a biblical doctrine it is the historic teaching of the Church.

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Point 11. The true church must teach that God and Jesus Christ have bodies of flesh and bones.

Luke 24:36-39 And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (NAS)

Acts 1:9-11 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."(NAS)

The above verses were sent with the letter you sent me for point 11

Luke does show that Jesus has a body of flesh and bones. Neither one of these verses cited state that the Father has a body of flesh and bones.

The Doctrine of God in Mormonism is in error in several different aspects. However I will only deal with this one about the Father having a body of flesh and bones for here.

John 4:23-24 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Luke 24:39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Jesus made both of the above statements. Speaking of the Father he said "God is spirit" Jesus also said "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." So from Jesus we learn that the Father is spirit and that a spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones.

The Book Of Mormon also states that God is Spirit.

Alma 18:26-27 And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? And he said, Yea. And Ammon said: This is God.

Alma 22:8-11 And now when Aaron heard this, his heart began to rejoice, and he said: Behold, assuredly as thou livest, O king, there is a God. And the king said: Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem? And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth. Believest thou this? And he said: Yea, I believe that the Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words.

Conclusion both the Bible and the Book of Mormon declare the Father is Spirit. Jesus declared that a spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones. So we know that God the Father is a Spirit that does not have a body of flesh and bones.

Point 12. The officers must be called by God.

The Christian Church would agree and not dispute this point.

Point 13. The true church must claim revelation from God.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets. (NAS)

The above verse was sent in the letter you sent me to go with point 13

I believe the gift of prophecy still exists however I believe it is different than the Old Testament Prophets that we had before. However the most important issue here is since the Joseph Smith did claim divine revelation was he a prophet of God or not?

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

There are people who have made some remarkable predictions yet they are not prophets of God. For example Nostradamus is credited for making some amazing predictions, of course he did not claim to be a prophet of God. There are those that have claimed to be a prophet of God and have started a religion. Charles Taze Russell claimed to be a prophet of God and he founded the Jehovah Witnesses church known today as the Watchtower Society. Now the informed Mormon and Christian would agree that Russell was not a prophet of God nor did he found "the true church" So the question is what separates a true prophet of God and these people and is it important to distinguish the difference?

When we look to the Bible we can soon learn how to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. We are also told why it is important to do so.

**(One test is if they tell us to follow after a god other than the God of the Bible.
Deut. 13:1-10)**

Mt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

22 **"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'"**

23 **"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me,**

Here we learn that there are those who prophesy in Jesus name and even perform miracles, but that does not mean they are from God!

Acts 3:22-23

22 "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you.

23 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

In this passage we can see why it would be important to distinguish a false prophet from a true one. It certainly does not sound wise to ignore what someone has to say, if they really are a prophet of God.

Deut 18:18-22 (NAS)

18 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

19 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

20 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

21 "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'

22 "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

(1) In verse 18-19 We see that we should listen to a true prophet or answer to God for it.

(2) In verse 21&22 We see it is easy to tell the difference from a true prophet from a false one. If he is a true prophet and he tells us something about the future it will come to pass. Notice he does not mention any exceptions, one false prophecy makes one a false prophet.

(3) As we can see in verse 20 God does not take the matter of false prophets lightly.

One might ask how can God judge the false prophet so harshly? The answer is because the prophet said God said something that he knows God did not say. God himself is the one that causes the prophecy to come true. Man when he is involved is only an instrument that God uses. Following is some scripture that shows this.

Ezek 12:25

"For I the LORD shall speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, **I shall speak the word and perform it,**" declares the Lord GOD."

Hab 2:2-3

Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and **it will not fail.** Though it tarries, wait for it; for **it will certainly come,** it will not delay.

Here we have seen that the Lord is the one that fulfills the prophecy and the fulfillment of it is certain. We know that God does not lie and nothing is too hard for him. Heb.6:18, Jer.32:27. L.D.S scripture also tells us that the Lord fulfills the prophecy and the fulfillment is certain.

D&C 1:38

38 What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.

It is interesting to me that many from Protestants type denominations will willingly enough put the prophecies of Joseph Smith to the test. While many Mormons are not willing to do so either because they do not believe it is important or they think it is wrong to do so. Following are a couple of statements from L.D.S authors that show that it is important to establish that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.13

Conversely, if Joseph Smith was not called of God, if he was a fraud and an impostor, if he was a false prophet -- then Mormonism, as the restored gospel is often called, is itself a fraud and a delusion. In that event we as a people are in as dark, as benighted, and as fallen a state as the rest of mankind. And thus the issue is squarely put. Joseph Smith either was a prophet or he was not. He was either a revealer of Christ and God and their saving truths or he was not. His work on earth was either for good or for ill. There is no middle ground, no gray area, no room for compromise.

Paul F. Royall, BYU Speeches, December 17, 1963, p.4

Joseph Smith was either a prophet of God, or he was a fraud. There is no halfway mark about him. He was either what he claimed he was, or he was the greatest prevaricator that this world has ever known. **I say that it is expedient for each of us to prove to ourselves whether he was a prophet or whether he was a fraud.**

Of course there are still those Mormons who say I already believe Joseph Smith was a prophet so what need is there for me to put his prophecies to the test? I say to them that the more I have studied even what I already believed the more it has increased my faith. I can honestly say that my faith in God and his word has increased greatly by sharing this faith with people with opposed views. The truth will endure all test and through opposition faith is strengthened. Take to heart what was said in the following L.D.S Conference Report.

Bryant S. Hinckley, Conference Report, April 1939, p.62

John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and many others were given the opportunity, not only to prove their loyalty to the Prophet, but to prove their fidelity to the truth. These men were tried in the crucible of affliction. Spurgeon once said: "The great soldiers of the Cross have been gathered from the highlands of adversity." It was true in those early days of our history. Those people were winnowed and sifted by the winds of adversity, until nothing but the wheat was left.

Following we will examine three prophecies by Joseph Smith. Your job is to decide if he was a true or false prophet. If they are not false then you must be able to explain how you can justify them as being true prophecies.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH & THE CIVIL WAR

First I would like you to look at the Civil War prophecy carefully and see if it was intended to be divided into time frames of the (1)Civil War (2)World War 1&2 (3) The second coming of Christ.

This is the way the L.D.S authorities have interpreted it so that it was not a false prophecy. I suggest to you that to interpret this prophecy in such a manner is not being true to the context! To help see the problem with this type of interpretation I have marked each time frame in the following way.

1. Everything to the left of #C# would have to pertain to the Civil War time period.
2. Everything to the left of #W# would have to pertain to World War 1&2 time period this section is also underlined.
3. Everything to the left of #2# would have to pertain to the 2nd coming of Christ *this section is also in italics.*

Other things that are in **Bold** are points that you should take notice of.

Date: December 25, 1832 D&C 87:1-8

1 Verily, **thus saith the Lord** concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, **beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina**, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; #C#

2 And the time will come that **war will be poured out upon all nations**, #W# beginning at this place.

3 For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; #C# and then **war shall be poured out upon all nations.** #W#

4 And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war.

5 And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation. #C#

6 *And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, **until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;***

7 *That the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.*

8 *Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, **saith the Lord.** Amen.#2#*

To interpret this prophecy in the manner that the L.D.S Authorities have explained it to us including World War 1&2 we have to change time frames at least 6 times in only 8 verses.

- (1) I cannot find any wording in the context of this passage that would suggest that it was intended to be interpreted in these time frames? If so what is it?
- (2) Interpreting this prophecy in this way how would one explain the fact that World War 1&2 are brought into the picture it is right in the middle of a sentence in verse 2 which is referring to the Civil War and then the subject changes back to the Civil War?
- (3) Considering the fact that this passage starts out and ends with "saith the Lord" Do you think this was intended to be a prophecy or just Joseph Smith's opinion?
- (4) According to verse 1&2 war was to be poured out on all nations beginning at what place? Did this happen in the Civil War time period?
- (5) If you are true to the context when should there be a full end to all nations?
- (6) Is this a true or false prophecy? How should you respond according to the Bible? Duet.18:18-22

Herber Kimball a member of the first presidency made the following statement. Keep in mind the civil war took place from 1861-1865

Journal of Discourses, Vol.9, p.54 - p.55,
Heber C. Kimball, April 14, 1861

There are many good books for you to read, and that are full of good instruction. Here are the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and Book of Doctrine and Covenants. You will see many revelations in the last-named book that are already fulfilled, and there are others that are still in the future. The Almighty through his Prophets foretold that the nation would make war upon this people, and that he would come out of his hiding place, and pour out his judgments upon those that rebel against him, and who persecuted his people, and set themselves against his house. Then it shall go forth like a mighty whirlwind upon the face of the whole earth. **In this country the North and the South will exert themselves against each other, and ere long the whole face of the United States will be in commotion, fighting one against another, and they will destroy their nationality.** They have never done anything for this people, and I don't believe they ever will. I have never prayed for the destruction of this Government, but I know that dissolution, sorrow, weeping, and distress are in store for the inhabitants of the United States, because of their conduct towards the people of God. Then the judgments will go forth to the nations of the earth. I have an understanding of these things, and I sincerely hope that you comprehend as clearly as I do. If you do, you will strive to prepare for those things that are coming upon the earth in these last days

Does it sound like Herber Kimball understood the civil war prophecy was to all be fulfilled at that time when he said "and they will destroy their nationality" ?

Even if you interpret this prophecy as something that was to all take place in one time period as I believe it was intended.(making it a false prophecy) One would still wonder about the parts of the prophecy that did come true. I am referring to the fact that the Civil War did take place, it did begin in South Carolina. How could Joseph have known that much before it happened? It might not be as amazing as you think if you take a look at what was happening in history at the time of his prophecy.

For Example the tension was bad enough between the north and the south that John Quincy Adams (then Secretary of State) predicted civil war himself 12 years earlier than Joseph Smith. The following can be found in the L.D.S Collectors Library under the bonus title American History, "An apprehensive view of the Missouri compromise"

AUTHOR: Thomas Jefferson

DATE:1820

SOURCE: America, Vol.5, Pg.305

[THE Missouri Compromise was the first of the great measures that followed the spirit of mutual accommodation found in the Constitution itself. It was an arrangement between the free and slave States, embodied in an Act of Congress approved March 6, 1820, which provided for the admission of Missouri into the Union as a slave State, but which prohibited slavery in all other Louisiana territory north of the southern boundary line of Missouri.

Jefferson betrays both apprehension and alarm for the future of the Union, in these three letters written in 1820. It is the Southern view of a lukewarm slave holder. Following it is the Northern view taken from the journal of **John Quincy Adams**, then (1820) Secretary of State. **His prophecy of civil war, in the third paragraph, was fulfilled in 1861**. Niles, whose moderate view follows, founded (1815) and edited "Niles' Weekly Register," the files of which are an invaluable record of contemporary events.]

Still this leaves the fact that Joseph Smith stated that the rebellion would begin in South Carolina. This is what a lot of people would have expected at that time. Before Joseph Smith's prophecy Congress passed a tariff act that South Carolina refused to accept and President Andrew Jackson alerted the troops to be ready for war. The following can be found in the L.D.S Collectors Library (bonus title)

History of the American People, Vol.4, Pg.36 - Pg.37

The election over, General Jackson once more chosen, her party ties broken, her principles of opposition still unsanctioned and untested, South Carolina proceeded with her radical programme of redress. **On the 24th of November (1832)** a state convention, summoned for the purpose and formed upon the model of a constitutional convention, adopted and promulgated a formal Ordinance of Nullification, which declared the tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 null and void and without force of law within the jurisdiction of **South Carolina, and gave solemn warning to the rest of the country that any attempt on the part of the federal government to enforce the nullified laws within her limits would sever South Carolina's connection with the Union and force her to organize a separate government**. The legislature of the State immediately took steps looking towards a resumption of some of the powers before formally surrendered to the Union, and provided for **putting the State in readiness to resist coercion by force of arms**. Mr. Hayne was recalled from Washington to become governor of the State; and Mr. Calhoun resigned the vice presidency to take his place upon the floor of the Senate, that he might, there contest every inch of the ground in debate.

In summary this prophecy by Joseph Smith did not come true. War was not poured out on all nations beginning at South Carolina. There also was not an end to all nations. The part that Joseph Smith did get right was common knowledge to the people at that time.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH & THE MISSOURI TEMPLE

Lets start by examining just what Joseph Smith prophesied concerning the temple in the western boundaries of Missouri.

Date: September 22 and 23, 1832

Place: Kirtland, Ohio

To: Joseph Smith and Six Elders

D&C 84:1-5

1 **A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high.**

2 Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

3 **Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.**

4 Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which **temple shall be reared in this generation.**

5 For verily **this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord,** and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.

Questions for D&C 84:1-5

Verse 1. Through what man did this prophecy come?

Verse 2. Was this intended to be just a hope of Joseph Smith's or was it to be a word from the Lord.

Verse 3. Where was this city and temple to be built? & By whose hand will it be dedicated?

Verse 4. When was this city and temple to be built?

Verse 5. This prophecy was given in 1832, was it that generation that should not all pass away until the city and temple were to be built in western Missouri and dedicated by the Hand of Joseph Smith? If not where in the text do you see the change in time frames? There was not a city or temple built in that generation in western Missouri. I believe there was recently a temple built in Missouri I am not sure of what County it is in but it does not matter. The generation of 1832 has died out and Joseph Smith is not around to dedicate the temple. Does this make it a false prophecy according to Duet.18:18-22?

This is a question that the 10th President Joseph Fielding Smith addressed and it can be found in:

Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.4, p.112

"It may be reasonable to assume that in giving this revelation to the Prophet the Lord did have in mind the generation of people who would still be living within the one hundred years from the time of the announcement of the revelation, and that they would enjoy the blessings of the temple, and a glorious cloud would rest upon it. It is also reasonable to believe that no soul living in 1832, is still living in morality on the earth. Notwithstanding this there is nothing in the commandment given to Nephi, neither in his assurance that the Lord would bless him in obtaining the plates that were so essential to the welfare spiritually and temporally of the descendants of Nephi, that in any sense is in conflict with the commandment or promise that was made by the Lord in the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. We read in another revelation given to the Church in January 1841, where the Lord absolves the members of the Church from the obligation of building the temple, in the following words:" (D&C 124:49-54)

A REVELATION FROM THE LORD

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

And the iniquity and transgressions of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hinder my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.

Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

And I will answer judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord your God. And this, I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God.

For I am the Lord your God, and will save all those of your brethren who have been pure in heart, and have been slain in the land of Missouri, saith the Lord.

The prophecy that was given in D&C 124:49-54 has a couple of problems that should be questioned. First of all this is supposed to be a word from the Lord that was relayed to us by Joseph Smith January 19, 1841 in Nauvoo, Illinois The original prophecy concerning the Temple that was to be built in the western part of Missouri took place in September 1832 nine years earlier. By this time Joseph Smith was very well aware of the fact that he could not go to Missouri and certainly he could not build a city and a temple there. This would seem to be a message of convenience to let him off of the hook to those who would still inquire when they would go to Missouri to build the city and temple.

There is a strong contrast between this message excusing them for not building the temple because they tried with all of their might and what Joseph Smith's friend believed when only 3 years had elapsed since his prophecy. John Whitmer is one of the 8 witnesses who is mentioned in the preface of the Book of Mormon. The following can be found in a Mormon publication by him.

Messenger and Advocate (Sept. 1835)

John Whitmer "Cleanliness," p.189

"The Lord has said that he would hold no one guilty, that should go with an open heart, up to the land of Zion; after five years from September, 1831. And the Lord has said that he would gather his people and specified the place where:

[D&C 84:1-4] "A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, jr. and six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high; yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church established in the last days for the gathering of his saints to stand upon mount Zion, which shall be built, beginning at the Temple Lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, jr. and others, with whom the Lord was well pleased.

Verily, this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation; for verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house." Cov. Sec. IV. Par. I.

Isaiah 66:18, "For I know their works, and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory."

According to this quotation the glory of the Lord shall appear; but they must come to a certain place in order that they can see it. Our former quotation determines the place, and who dare dispute it? The Lord has said by the mouth of Isaiah; that he would perform his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act."

Obviously at this point it was still believed that the temple would be built in their generation and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith. More important is the contrast between the nature of the God of in D&C 124:49-54 and the God mentioned in the Bible. The God we learn of in the Bible declares that he himself will see to it that his prophets prophecy will come to pass and nothing is too hard for him. Scripture previously quoted showing this was Ezek.12:12-25, Hab.2:2-3, Heb.6:18, Jer.32:27 also the D&C 1:38

In contrast the God we learn of in D&C 124 excuses them for not fulfilling the prophecy Joseph Smith gave concerning the building of the temple because they tried with all of their might (verse 49). I ask you by who's power is a prophecy fulfilled, is it by God's power or man's? Does your answer line up with what the Bible says?

The passage quoted in the D&C 124:49-54 is in conflict with the nature of God in the Bible. In the Bible we are told how to identify a false prophet. The test we are told is that if a prophet tells us of future events and they do not come to pass that this is a false prophet. The only exception we are ever given in the Bible is when coming judgment is stopped due to repentance. Jonah and Nineveh would be an example of this.

In the D&C we are told that although the prophecy did not come to pass they are excused because they tried with all of their might.

It is not reasonable to accept Joseph Smith's word for what he says the Lord said in D&C 124:49-54 when he has already proven to be a false prophet according to the Bible. This section in the D&C was clearly a prophecy of convenience for Joseph Smith he was trying to cover up his own false prophecy with another so-called word from the Lord. It only takes one false prophecy to become a false prophet.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND THE 56 YEARS

History of the Church, Vol.2, Ch.13, p.181
Kirtland, February 14, 1835--

This day, a meeting was called of those who journeyed last season to Zion for the purpose of laying the foundation of its redemption, together with as many other of the brethren and sisters as were disposed to attend.

President Joseph Smith, Jun., presiding, read the 15th chapter of John, and said: Let us endeavor to solemnize our minds that we may receive a blessing, by calling on the Lord. After an appropriate and affecting prayer, the brethren who went to Zion [in Zion's camp] were requested to take their seats together in a part of the house by themselves.

President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God had commanded it; and it was made known to him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. He then gave a relation of some of the circumstances attending us while journeying to Zion--our trials, sufferings; and said God had not designed all this for nothing, but He had it in remembrance yet; and it was the will of God that those who went to Zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nigh--even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.

The President also said many things; such as the weak things, even the smallest and weakest among us, shall be powerful and mighty, and great things shall be accomplished by you from this hour; and you shall begin to feel the whisperings of the Spirit of God; and the work of God shall begin to break forth from this time; and you shall be endowed with power from on high.

In this text we can see that Joseph Smith was the one leading this meeting and the quotes in this section are things he said.

We also learn that God has called the Meeting and the things mentioned in the meeting are not just an opinion or estimation. Rather the things mentioned in the meeting were made known to him by revelation and by the Holy Spirit.

We learn that the people who went to Zion were in the meeting.

We learn that the people that went to Zion were the ones that were to go and prune the vineyard for the Last time.

We learn that the pruning of the vineyard or the coming of the Lord should come about within 56 years.

Collected Discourses, Vol.5, Francis M. Lyman,
April 5, 1896

On that day also the Prophet announced that they were to be called into the ministry and to go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, "for the coming of the Lord, which is nigh, even fifty-six years should wind up the scene." The harvest was ripe, and the laborers were few, and they were to cast in their might and their labors for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Lord; and he announced, at that time, that in fifty-six years the scene should be wound up, that some scene was to be wound up in 1891--fifty-six years added to 1835. And thus many of the older brethren were expecting to discover something in 1891 that perhaps it has been felt has not been accomplished.

..... **In the culmination of these events we recognize the fulfillment of the prediction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that about 1890 or 1891, the scene would change, and the conditions that had existed from those early days of persecutions and troubles should be wound up and cease forever. The Prophets Brigham Young and John Taylor laid down their lives while carrying forward the great work, though it was not their good fortune to witness the relief and the independence and the measure of sovereignty of statehood that the people of this state enjoy today. But after that time when the Lord had indicated that the scene should change, and the winding up of the conditions that had formerly existed, from that time till now, everything has moved in harmony with the directions and counsels of the Lord through His servants.** Think of the change of feeling from hostility to friendliness in the people of the United States toward the people of this state. We not only have the governor and judges of our own choice, and courts organized here in this state, but we have our senators in congress, and our representative, and they are as honored and equally influential as are those of any other state in the Union; and the Lord has magnified His people and **verified the prophesy of His servant Joseph in regard to this great change. Is it not clear that the inspiration in the Prophet Joseph at that time indicated and pointed to the conditions that we see today?** The scene is changed, and it has changed to remain, and will never return to the old conditions again.

After reading what Joseph Smith said in the meeting and a related passage by Lyman some logical questions that should follow concerning this prophecy are:

1. The meeting was commanded by God and the contents of the meeting were made known to Joseph Smith by revelation and by the Holy Spirit. Considering this and the fact that Francis M. Lyman called this a prophecy why shouldn't we view it as such? Was there anything in the context of what Joseph Smith said in the meeting to justify Lyman's interpretation of the 56 years as being a change in persecution and political parties?
2. How can the 56 years be taken as just an opinion when the text says these things were made known to Joseph Smith by revelation and by the Holy Spirit?
3. Isn't the pruning of the vineyard for the last time a reference to the harvesting of souls similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38 & 13:36-39. If so why would it be the last time unless the Lord was expected to return? Is not this harvest still taking place today?

Joseph Smith did make other statements on other occasions that seem contrary to his prophecy that Christ should return in 56 years. This does not change the fact that in the meeting held in February 14, 1835 Joseph Smith did tell them that the pruning of the vineyard and the coming of the Lord should be wound up in 56 years. This was supposedly made known to him by revelation and by the Holy Spirit.

1. Joseph Smith prophesied the return of Christ within 56 years. History of the Church Vol.2, Ch.13, p.181-182.
2. Joseph Smith said "I prophesy in the name of the Lord God, and let it be written--the Son of Man will not come in the clouds of heaven till I am eighty-five years old. History of the Church, Vol.5, Ch.17, p.336
3. Joseph Smith said after praying to know when Christ would return he heard a voice and after hearing it he said." I was left thus, without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the beginning of the millennium or to some previous appearing, or whether I should die and thus see His face." History of the Church, Vol.5, Ch.17, p.324
4. Joseph Smith said "**Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come.** Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and **all that say so are false teachers.**" History of the Church, Vol.6, Ch.10, p.254

How can these 4 statements be reconciled? They are contradictory and from a man who claims he is relaying Gods word to us? Considering the facts it is not reasonable to accept him as a prophet of God.

When looking at statements by Joseph Smith as in historical documents it is helpful to know how those around him understood what he meant. Following are some sources that show that those who listened to and believed Joseph Smith fully expected to see Christ return in their lifetime.

History of the Church, Vol.1, p.176, Footnotes

In addition to the spiritual manifestations already mentioned as having occurred at this conference of June 3rd-6th it should be said that according to John Whitmer's History of the Church (ch. v): "**The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph** in an unusual manner, and **he prophesied** that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight and ordained him to the High Priesthood (i.e. ordained him a High Priest), after the holy order of God **And the Spirit fell upon Lyman and he prophesied concerning the coming of Christ** He said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven with a shout, with all the holy angels with Him. (end quote)

Right after Joseph Smith ordained Lyman Wight to the office of High Priest, Lyman prophesied that some people there would be alive when Christ returned. Why is there no record here of Joseph Smith rebuking him since now man knows when Jesus will return? It would seem that this was so because that is precisely what Joseph Smith taught. Lyman Wight himself made a false prophecy here right after the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph and he ordained Lyman a High Priest.

History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.23, p.323

"I asked of him a father's blessing, which he granted by laying his hands upon my head, in the name of Jesus Christ, and declaring that **I should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes.**" (end quote)

The blessing was that this man should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes. If this continuation of the Priest's office still holds after his death why does it end upon the return of Christ? Or could it be that it was believed that this man would live until the return of Christ due to Joseph Smith's prophecy?

History of the Church, Vol.2, Ch.13, p.186-189

President Joseph Smith, Jun., said that the first business of the meeting was, for the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, to pray, each one, and then proceed to choose twelve men from the Church, as Apostles, to go to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. The Three Witnesses were then blessed by the laying on of the hands of the Presidency. The Witnesses then, according to a former commandment, proceeded to make choice of the Twelve. Their names are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Lyman E. Johnson, | 2. Brigham Young, |
| 3. Heber C. Kimball, | 4. Orson Hyde, |
| 5. David W. Patten, | 6. Luke S. Johnson, |
| 7. William E. M'Lellin, | 8. John f. Boynton, |
| 9. Orson Pratt, | 10. William Smith, |
| 11. Thomas P. Marsh, | 12. Parley P. Pratt, |

Lyman E. Johnson, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball came forward; and the Three Witnesses laid their hands upon each one's head and prayed, separately.

The blessing of Lyman E. Johnson was, in the name of Jesus Christ, that he should bear the tidings of salvation to nations, tongues, and people, until the utmost corners of the earth shall hear the tidings; and that he shall be a witness of the things of God to nations and tongues, and that holy angels shall administer to him occasionally; and that no power of the enemy shall prevent him from going forth and doing the work of the Lord; and that **he shall live until the gathering is accomplished**, according to the holy prophets; and he shall be like unto Enoch; and his faith shall be like unto his; and he shall be called great among all the living; and Satan shall tremble before him; and **he shall see the Savior come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory.**

.....**Heber C. Kimball's blessing was**, in substance, that he shall be made like unto those who have been blessed before him; and be favored with the same blessing. That he might receive visions; the ministration of angels, and hear their voice; and even come into the presence of God; that many millions may be converted by his instrumentality; that angels may waft him from place to place, and **that he may stand unto the coming of our Lord**, and receive a crown in the Kingdom of our God; that he be made acquainted with the day when Christ shall come; that he shall be made perfect in faith; and that the deaf shall hear, the lame shall walk, the blind shall see, and greater things than these shall he do; that he shall have boldness of speech before the nations, and great power. (end quote)

Here again Joseph Smith is present the Lord's work is taking place and Heber C. Kimball and Lyman E. Johnson are said they would live to see the 2nd coming of Christ. How can we possibly say that Joseph Smith did not put a date to the return of Christ? Certainly those who were close to him believed some of them would be alive when Christ returned. By Joseph Smith's own words this makes him a false teacher.

History of the Church, Vol.6, Ch.10, p.254

Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and **all that say so are false teachers.** (end quote)

So far we can conclude Joseph Smith did indeed prophecy the return of Christ within 56 years. Some of those that were close to him believed they would also live to see the return of Christ. These events were recorded supposedly while doing the Lord's work. Joseph Smith also made contradicting statements that cannot be reconciled. Robert A. Morey has a book titled "How to answer a Mormon" the majority of this book of 119 pages is false prophecies by Joseph Smith. I only mentioned 3 here. Remember it only takes one false prophecy to be a false prophet.

Point 14. The true church must be a missionary church.

The Christian Church would agree and not dispute this point.

Point 15. The true church must be a restored Church.

This was already covered on starting on page 21

Point 16. The true church must practice baptism for the dead.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

Baptism for the dead is a very old idea that is still practiced by some groups in our era in which we live today. Mormons usually think that this idea is unique to their religion however this is not entirely true as you can see in the quote from the Encyclopaedia Britannica below.

New Apostolic Church: church organized in Germany in 1863 as the Universal Catholic Church, by members of the Catholic Apostolic Church who believed that new apostles must be appointed to replace deceased apostles and rule the church until the Second Coming of Christ. The present name was adopted in 1906. Its doctrines are similar to the parent church, but the new church was influenced by continental Protestantism, and over time its worship services and tendencies became less Catholic and more Protestant.

The church emphasizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which include prophecy, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing. Sacraments are **baptism**, Holy Communion, and holy sealing (the "dispensing and reception of the Holy Spirit"). Sealing can only be conferred by the laying on of hands on the head of a member by an apostle, and it assures the member of participation in Christ's rule on Earth for 1,000 years after he returns. **Like the Latter-day Saints, the New Apostolic Church teaches that the sacraments can be received by a living member for a dead person.**

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Since we are dealing with the 17 Points of the true church according to Mormonism we will start by including quotes from L.D.S Authorities.

Smith, Joseph Fielding. Doctrines of Salvation. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. 3 vols. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1954-56. (Vol.2, Chapter9, pg.161-162)

BAPTISM FOR DEAD

NO SALVATION WITHOUT BAPTISM. One of the most emphatic and positive statements of our Savior was his saying to Nicodemus: Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." **That to be born of water means to be baptized** is so clear it will not admit of successful dispute. To be born of the Spirit is just as positive a statement in relation to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is received by the laying on of hands.

Nor did the Savior limit his remark by any qualifying clause to refer only to men who are living and with the opportunity of hearing the gospel, or to eliminate from his command those who have passed beyond. The statement is dogmatic, positive, and without qualification: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!"

"PERFORMANCE OF VICARIOUS ORDINANCES. Baptism is an ordinance belonging to this life, as also are confirmation and ordination to the priesthood, and the man who does not receive these blessings here cannot receive them in the spirit world. There he may repent and believe and accept the truth, but he cannot be baptized, confirmed, or ordained, or endowed, for these ordinances belong here. What is to be done in the matter? We are going to take substitutes who will act vicariously, which means one acting for another, and in the temples they will stand for those who are dead and there, in the behalf of the dead, receive all these blessings for them. When they do this, if the dead accept the labor performed, it is accounted unto them the same as if they had acted for themselves. The Lord did a great vicarious work for all men, and he has delegated power to us in a lesser degree to perform a vicarious work for the dead. So we, too, may become saviors to our fellow men in this manner, performing work for them that they cannot perform for themselves."

McConkie, Bruce R. Mormon Doctrine. 2d ed. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966. page 72-73,

Baptism For the Dead

"Based on the eternal principle of vicarious service, **the Lord has ordained baptism for the dead as the means whereby all his worthy children of all ages can become heirs of salvation in his kingdom. Baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom,** and except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit he cannot gain an inheritance in that heavenly world. (John 3:3-5.) Obviously, during the frequent periods of apostate darkness when the gospel light does not shine, and also in those geographical areas where legal administrators are not found, hosts of people live and die without ever entering in at the gate of baptism so as to be on the path leading to eternal life. For them a just God has ordained baptism for the dead, a vicarious-proxy labor. (D. & C. 124:28-36; 127; 128; 1 Cor. 15:29.)"

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie,
Second Chance Theory, page 685-687

"There is no such thing as a second chance to gain salvation by accepting the gospel in the spirit world after spurning, declining, or refusing to accept it in this life. It is true that there may be a second chance to hear and accept the gospel, but those who have thus procrastinated their acceptance of the saving truths will not gain salvation in the celestial kingdom of God. Salvation for the dead is the system by means of which those who "die without a knowledge of the gospel" (D. & C. 128:5) may gain such knowledge in the spirit world and then, following the vicarious performance of the necessary ordinances, become heirs of salvation on the same basis as though the gospel truths had been obeyed in mortality. Salvation for the dead is limited expressly to those who do not have opportunity in this life to accept the gospel but who would have taken the opportunity had it come to them....."

Thus the false and heretical doctrine that people who fail to live the law in this life (having had an opportunity so to do) will have a further chance of salvation in the life to come is a soul-destroying doctrine, a doctrine that lulls its adherents into carnal security and thereby denies them a hope of eternal salvation. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, pp. 181-196.)"

To sum it up the Mormons believe that one cannot be saved or in other words enter into the kingdom of God or what is known as the celestial kingdom unless they are baptized. (Note sometimes L.D.S also define saved as being resurrected, Mormon Doctrine, pg. 671) People that do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel according to Mormonism can hear and accept it in the life to come. When a person in the L.D.S church is baptized in their behalf the deceased can then accept the Mormon gospel and enter into the celestial kingdom. This is the reason why the Mormon Church is heavily involved in genealogical research. In the quotes from the Mormon authorities we are given two bible references. One reference mentions baptism for the dead and one that does not mention baptism at all. (1 Cor.15: 29 & John 3:3-5) It is not wise to build a doctrine on one obscure verse in the bible especially if it is in conflict with scripture that is clear and comprehensible. We should use the clear passages to help us understand those passages that are harder to understand.

The following truths are in conflict with this Mormon doctrine:

1. One can be saved without being baptized.
2. Salvation comes through faith; it is a matter of the heart.
3. There is no biblical reference instructing or suggesting that one does genealogical research. (A necessary step preceding baptism for the dead)
4. Born of water does not mean baptized.
5. There is no second chance even for those who have not heard the gospel.
6. The context of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is about the resurrection, not baptism.

1. One can be saved apart from being baptized.

If a person had to be baptized to be saved, you would think that we would find people like Jesus and the Apostle Paul baptizing converts on a regular basis. Furthermore if baptism for the dead were true it would certainly be an important practice. However Paul was thankful that he did not baptize very many people. Also Jesus did not baptize anyone that we know of. This would make no sense if either of these concepts were true.

1 Cor 1:14-17 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, that no man should say you were baptized in my name. Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.

John 4:1-2 When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)

Take another look at 1 Cor 1:17. Paul said "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel". Paul here separates baptism from the gospel. In other words he did not include baptism as part of the gospel. Yet we are saved by the gospel in the following verse.

1 Cor 15:1-2 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

Following are two examples of someone who was saved apart from baptism.

In Luke 23:39-43 we read of a thief who was crucified with Jesus. This man rebukes the other thief for mocking Jesus then we read: **Luke 23:42-43** *And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."* This thief obviously was not taken down from the cross and baptized! Yet this thief was saved that is he is now in the presence of God.

I should mention that there is a difference of opinion about where Paradise was. Some would argue that Paradise was not heaven, but rather Abraham's bosom. Three days after being crucified and buried Jesus said Mary "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" John 20:17. Yet Jesus told the thief that *"today you shall be with Me in Paradise."* Some believe Abraham's bosom was a holding place for the righteous dead separate from Hades.

This was before Jesus atoned for our sins. This is derived from Luke 16:19-31. Some believe they could not be in the presence of the Father yet because Jesus had not yet paid the price for their sins.

Others would argue that Jesus did indeed go directly into the presence of the Father. Right after Jesus told the thief he would be with him in Paradise Jesus said "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." The spirit of Jesus went directly into the presence of the Father, but his body went to the grave. When 3 days after Jesus' crucifixion he said "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" John 20:17 Jesus was referring to his physical body. Furthermore Paradise was the 3rd heaven according to 2 Cor.12: 2-4.

The 3 heavens are

- (a) the sky where the eagles fly
- (b) the stars in outer space
- (c) the dwelling place of God.

The Old Testament saints also went directly into the presence of the Father. Examples of this would be Enoch Gen.5: 24, Heb.11: 5, also Elijah 2 Kings 2:1-11

Paul also indicated that now if we die as a Christian we go directly into the presence of the Lord 2 Cor.5: 8, Phil.1: 23.

Whichever view one takes we still have the thief in the presence of the Father without being baptized.

The second example can be found in the text below.

Acts 10:44-47 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?"

These Gentiles in this text were baptized, but this was after they had received the Holy Spirit. Even those that say you must be baptized to be saved recognize that un-saved people do not have the Holy Spirit. These people were saved first and even speaking in tongues which is a gift of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. They were saved first and then baptized 2nd. Therefore baptism in itself is not what saved them.

There are a couple of other texts some may use to show we are saved by baptism. So we should look at those texts as well.

Mark 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

The key in this passage for those that shall be saved is their belief. Notice this verse shows that unbelief is the reason for being condemned not the lack of being baptized.

1 Pet 3:18-21

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,

20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Noah and his family were saved through the water because Noah was obedient and built the ark like he was told. Noah first believed God and then followed instructions. Corresponding to that we first put our trust in God and follow his instructions to be baptized. Yet it is not the dunking in the water that saves us, rather our appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus.

Noah would not have been saved if he did not use the ark. Being dunked in water does not save without the heart being purified by the Holy Spirit. Baptism by itself with an unregenerate heart saves nobody. However the thief on the cross is an example of someone who was saved by a regenerate heart without baptism.

2. Salvation comes through faith; it is a matter of the heart.

When we read MT.19:16 we learn that a rich young man was asked specifically how to gain eternal life. He was told to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. (This is a matter of the heart!)

When we read LK.10:25 we learn a lawyer asked Jesus specifically how to gain eternal life. He was told "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Again a matter of the heart

When we read Acts 16:30 we learn a jailer asked Paul and Silas what they had to do to be saved. They were told believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. There is no biblical reference instructing or suggesting that one does genealogical research.

(A necessary step preceding baptism for the dead)

If baptism for the dead were a true doctrine it certainly would be important. One would expect to find it clearly taught in the bible, which a reading of the New Testament shows it is not. Furthermore since genealogy is a necessary step preceding baptism for the dead we would also expect to find reference to it in the bible. Aside from the genealogies of Jesus showing that he is the Messiah told about in the Old Testament genealogy is only mentioned twice in the New Testament.

Titus 3:9 But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless.

1 Tim 1:3-4 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

Granted these texts have nothing to do with baptism for the dead. They are however our only references to genealogy in the New Testament. They certainly in no way encourage anybody to do genealogical work.

4. Born of water does not mean baptized.

In Doctrines of Salvation we were told that born of water means to be baptized.

John 3:3-8 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The word "*baptized*" is not in this passage. Although the Jewish mind may connect baptism with the use of the word "water" I believe the usage of the word is much deeper than that. The passage is referring to someone that is born again. We are first born physically. Before we are born spiritually we are said to be dead in our trespasses and sins, Eph.2:1-5, Col.2:13.

In other words until you are born again even though you are physically alive, you are spiritually dead. The second birth is spiritual, when you are "born again" you are both physically and spiritually alive. The Mormons of course focus on the part of the text that reads: **"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"**

We will take this in two parts.

A. **"Born"** does not mean baptized.

B. **"water"** does not mean baptized.

A. "Born" does not mean baptized. The word "born" in this passage is defined by Strong's definition of Greek words in the following manner.

1080 gennao (ghen-nah'-o); from a variation of 1085; to procreate (properly, of the father, but by extension of the mother); **figuratively, to regenerate:**

KJV-- bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring.

B. Water does not mean baptized either.

Thayers definition of Greek words.

5204 hudor-

water:

a) used of water in rivers, in fountains, in pools

b) used of the water of the deluge

c) used of water in any of the earth's repositories

d) used of water as the primary element, out of and through which the world that was before the deluge, arose and was compacted

e) used of the waves of the sea

f) figuratively, used of many peoples

"Water" is not a reference to baptism. This word "water" in this passage by definition can mean literal water. This Greek word however is not bound only to this literal definition. This same Greek word "water" found in John 3:5 is also used in the following passage. Eph.5:26

Eph 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

(The next two verses give us a little more insight.)

1 Pet 1:23 for you have **been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, **through the living and abiding word of God.**

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Notice the proceeding verse declares that we are not saved by deeds done in righteousness. In the following text we will see that Jesus declares his baptism is a deed to fulfill all righteousness.

Matt 3:13-15 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

Furthermore Jesus when asked about doing the works (or deeds) of God he simply says they must believe in him as you can see in the following text.

John 6:28-29 They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Let us consider again 1 Pet.1:23 we find that these ones that have been born again have done this through the word of God. How are they born again? They are born again through the word of God. Remember Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about being born again in John Ch. 3

Take special notice of how Eph 5:25-27 said that Christ cleansed his church. (having cleansed her by the washing of **water** with the word) Water in this case is used in reference to the word of God. Christ church is cleansed by the washing of **water** with the word. The Church in Eph. 5:25-27 is made up of "born again believers" Since Jesus said that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" John 3:3 we can conclude that his church is born again. Christ's church is born again through the word of God by the washing of **water** with the word as well as the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit Titus 3:5.

In the very next chapter after the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus we find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. Here again we see Jesus using water as an illustration that does not mean baptism, but rather Jesus is referring to eternal life which is salvation.

John 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of **water** springing up to eternal life."

Isa 12:3 Therefore you will joyously draw **water** from the springs of salvation.

Jesus talked to Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman using "water" as an illustration. In both cases Jesus was talking about eternal life. The word "baptism" is not in either text. Jesus certainly knew that a Jewish mind might connect baptism with the use of the word "water". However the bible also shows us that the usage of the word "water" is much more than the act of baptism. The Jewish mind would be very aware of that as well. The bible shows us that the term "water" has to do with our regeneration by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. Baptism is our act of obedience to God's command and our proclaiming to the world that we have been regenerated through the Holy Spirit and the word of God.

Born again is only found 4 times in scripture.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (KJV says begotten us again in this verse)

1 Pet 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

Born of water is only found once.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

None of these texts clearly connect baptism with being born again. There are writings where some of the early church fathers did connect the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus with baptism. In a similar fashion works are tied in with saving faith as James points out in his letter. Still we are told that our works do not save us. This was covered under the subject heading "Grace vs. Works." Our works is the fruit showing we are saved. Baptism is not a suggestion it is a command. The true believer that has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit acts in obedience to this and identifies himself with Jesus Christ. The believer is not saved merely because he has been dunked in water. It is an act of obedience that confesses he has been regenerated and identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are examples in scripture of people being saved before baptism and apart from baptism. There are no examples of anybody being saved without a change in heart. Furthermore the bible shows us that genuine faith will produce works. Yet it clearly states that we are not saved by our works.

5. There is no second chance even for those who have not heard the gospel.

There is no second chance even for people that have not heard the Mormon gospel or the real gospel, after death comes the judgment. There is no record in the entire bible of anyone receiving salvation after they had already died. Once they are judged there is no record of an appeal like we have in our courts. (Judgment comes after death)

Heb 9:27 And inasmuch as **it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.**

According to the first chapter in Romans people are held accountable for knowing there is a God, because of creation. Creation itself tells us that God exist. Therefore Man is responsible for what he has done with this knowledge of knowing that God exist.

Rom 1:16-23 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that **they are without excuse.** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

This accounts for those who have not heard the gospel. Creation itself testifies of God's existence. These people are held accountable for what is done with that knowledge of God and as the text states "they are without excuse".

6. The context of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is about the resurrection, not baptism.

Many Mormons have a testimony declaring that deceased people have appeared to them thanking them for being baptized on their behalf. To this I must state that our experiences should be interpreted through the Bible. The Bible should not be interpreted through our experiences. Baptism for the dead and its implications are in conflict with what the bible teaches. Therefore it is not wise to accept even what a spirit may have told them concerning this. Demons have been around for a long time and can easily deceive people by masquerading as a deceased person and help promote that which is contrary to the word of God. (The Bible) We are in fact warned not to believe every spirit,

1 John 4:1, Galatians 1:8

Having said that we will now examine the context of 1 Corinthians Chapter 15.

We will see that Paul is aware of some people who practiced baptism for the dead. Paul argued that it was not logical for those people to believe in baptism for the dead and then deny the resurrection.

The Scripture is from The New American Standard and I added my commentary in boxes throughout the text.

The whole chapter in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is on the resurrection. This chapter is not a teaching on baptism!

1 Corinthians Chapter 15

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Verses 1-4 Paul tells us the gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Verses 5- 10 Paul gives an account of the appearances of Jesus after he was resurrected.

11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Verses 11-12 Paul brings up the fact that some among the Corinthians did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

- 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;
14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.
15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.
16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;
17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.
18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Verses 13-19 Paul declares that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then they are false witnesses and our faith is worthless because we are still in our sins.

- 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.
21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.
22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.
23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

Verses 21-23 We are told Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. Through Adam mankind receives death but through Jesus we will live. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection; those that belong to Jesus will be resurrected at his return.

- 24 then come the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.
25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.
26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.
28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

Verses 24-28 After the return of the resurrected Christ and the resurrection of the saints the end will come. That is the end of this age then Christ shall abolish all authority and he shall reign until all enemies are subject to him. Jesus will conquer even death.

29 Otherwise, what will **those** do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are **they** baptized for them?

30 Why are **we** also in danger every hour?

Verse 29-30 Paul ask why certain people who he simply refers to as "**they**" do baptism for the dead if they do not believe in the resurrection. He is pointing out that these two beliefs are inconsistent with each other.

Paul ask also why he and other Christians would stand in jeopardy? Since they were persecuted for teaching the resurrection it would be inconsistent and irrational to also declare there was no resurrection.

Did you notice the contrast between verse 29 & 30? In verse 28 Paul refers to some people that he does not include as being in unity with himself or other Christians. These people practice baptism for the dead and he refers to them as "**they**"(KJV) or "**they and those**" (NAS). Then in the next verse Paul includes himself with other Christians who proclaim the resurrection. Here in verse 30 Paul uses the word "**we**". The contrast is between "they" and "we". One group includes himself and others who proclaim the resurrection ("we"). The other group of people Paul makes no connection with between himself and other Christians. Paul simply states that "they" practice baptism for the dead.

In Acts 17:23-33 we see where Paul used an idol with the inscription of an unknown god to proclaim the true God to them. Paul did not believe in their idol anymore than he believed in baptism for the dead here. Paul only pointed to their own false belief as a reference they could relate to teach them about the truth of God and the resurrection.

31 I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

34 Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Verse 31-34 Paul declares that unless there is a resurrection there is no reason to undergo persecution for proclaiming the resurrection. Without the resurrection he might as well adopt the heathen philosophy of "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Paul then tells them not to be deceived by this teaching from those who have no knowledge of God, thus denying the resurrection. This corrupt doctrine denying the resurrection promotes sin which they are to abstain from.

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and

40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body it is raised an imperishable body

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

<p>Verse 35-50 Paul explains concerning the bodies of the resurrected dead.</p>
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51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.
54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put
on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in
victory.
55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;
57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work
of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

END OF CHAPTER

Verse 51-58 Paul explains concerning the bodies of the translated living.

One could certainly expound more on this chapter, but the main point is that from
start to finish 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is about the resurrection.

The context of this chapter is not about baptism.

Carefully consider the purpose and depth of the Apostle Paul's ministry.

Rom 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Rom 15:15-16 But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again,
because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles
might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

1Thes 2:2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we
had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

1 Tim 1:11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

Acts 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching
you publicly and from house to house,

Acts 20:27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

1Thes 2:9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.

All scripture is indeed inspired by God 2 Tim.3: 16. Dealing with the subject of salvation some people seem to look only at a few obscure and hard to understand passages and ignore the rest of the teachings on the subject. It almost seems to be Paul verses an obscure passage by James, John, Mark or Peter. We need to remember that when scripture appears to contradict itself it means we do not understand something and need to dig a little deeper for answers. This has always been the case in my own studies.

I certainly do not want to say that we should ignore any scripture, but I would like you to follow me along a line of logic and reasoning for a moment. Those who believe that baptism or works are conditions of salvation should carefully consider the purpose of the Apostle Paul's ministry. Paul was set apart by God to preach the gospel. He declares that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. He did not shrink back from declaring the whole purpose of God or anything that was profitable. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books in our New Testament. Paul said he did not come to baptize.

Paul never connects baptism as a condition of salvation.. Paul was very clear that we are saved apart from works Rom.3:28, Eph. 2:8-9, 2 Tim.1:9, Titus 3:5. There are some passages in scripture that are hard to understand. It is best to let the clear passages shed light on the harder to understand passages. Paul never taught that works or baptism were conditions of our salvation. His whole purpose was to preach the gospel so that we might be saved. Considering this fact wouldn't you find that rather odd that he did not ever clearly explain works or baptism as conditions of salvation, if those things were true?

Point 17. By their fruits ye shall know them

Matt 7:20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

I have found Mormons to quote this verse and point out things of the physical nature to state that they have fruit. Judging by the amount of money or great chapels that have been built one might conclude that the Catholic church is the way we should go. The same could be said of their power or influence. Judging by large crowds accepting Jesus we could point to Billy Graham. Judging by the amount of literature that is produced one could point to the Watchtower Organization also known as Jehovah Witnesses.

We have already seen the fruit of wrong doctrine concerning God, Jesus and salvation and false prophecies by Joseph Smith here in these pages. However I think that fruit in the bible is on an individual basis concerning fruits of the spirit.

Gal 5:19-25 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (NAS)

I do not agree with most of the 17 points and I believe that I have supplied ample evidence from the bible to support my view against it. The bottom line however is that it is not my opinion that matters. What matters is what the Bible says. I agree with the bible and therefore cannot accept most L.D.S doctrine.

Love
Robert

This was prepared for my dad and portions of it are copied from the book I wrote on Mormonism. I do see the need to share this with others struggling with the teachings put out by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Please remember that the people themselves are deceived. They are not the enemy. There are many good things that can be said about the Mormon Church and many of the people in it. My objection to the L.D.S church is not the people. My objection is that it is not true! It's teachings are leading people away from my Lord Jesus Christ whom is their only hope for salvation.
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